



CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS PARKS AND RECREATION 2010 MASTER PLAN



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Introduction

The City of Grand Rapids has developed this Parks and Recreation Plan to serve as a road map for decisions to be made in the next five years. To that end, this document forms the policy basis for improvements and new initiatives that will meet the recreational goals and interests of the Grand Rapids community.

The City of Grand Rapids' parks are assets that provide amazing value and benefits to the community. Parks, public spaces and related programs contribute to community revitalization, civic engagement, economic development, safer neighborhoods, green infrastructure, children's ability to learn, public health, arts and cultural programs, tourism, smart growth and climate change management.

At the same time, Grand Rapids faces significant challenges to maintain these assets due to the economic stress facing many governments. Parks, public spaces and recreation programs are critical core city services and need to be prioritized as such. Unfortunately, the Parks and Recreation Department has experienced drastic cuts in the past eight years. Park maintenance budgets have shrunk by 40% since 2002. 2010 staffing levels are down 68% compared to 2002.

A 2009 study by the Trust for Public Land compiled information regarding the 77 most populous cities in the United States. The City Park Facts report documents basic information on urban park systems including acreage,

¹ American Planning Association – City Parks Forum Briefing Papers

facilities, staffing, usership and more. Total spending on parks and recreation ranged from less than \$20 per resident per year to nearly \$300 per resident per year. Since 2002, the Parks and Recreation Department's spending per resident per year fell from \$38 to an estimated \$23 (This figure does not include the 21st Century Learning Centers grant for after school programming.) During this same period, spending on park infrastructure has been minimal. The consequences of further delays means there will be more extensive and costly improvements in the future. This amount of spending does not allow adequate funding to maintain the existing level of service, much less provide a sustainable high quality system of parks and recreation services necessary for our community to grow and prosper. This downward trend needs to be reversed.

The story of the City of Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation Department is not all doom and gloom. The City has many existing and emerging relationships with individuals, organizations, and institutions which provide numerous opportunities to collaborate in service delivery. One of the most remarkable relationships is with the recently formed Friends of Grand Rapids Parks, an independent, citizen-driven effort to support parks and public spaces in the city. Through this and other relationships we can work collectively to enhance the parks, public spaces and programs that the citizens desire.

Broadly speaking, Grand Rapids officials intend to use this plan to guide their work on all future park and recreation projects within the city. It is also a strategic document that articulates specific goals to various agencies and organizations that fund local recreation and park improvement

projects. Specifically, this plan is developed in accordance with the Guidelines for Community Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Plans published by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR). A five-year, DNR- approved recreation plan is necessary for the City of Grand Rapids to pursue DNR-administered grants. This plan is written for the City of Grand Rapids and covers all aspects of parks, open spaces and recreation within the community.

Why are Parks and Recreation important?

Environmental Benefits

- Protect valued natural resource areas
- Demonstrate/foster environmental stewardship
- Provide pervious areas that filter and absorb urban runoff
- Trees reduce air pollution, sequester carbon and provide shade to reduce the urban heat island effect

Economic Benefits

- Increase nearby property values (and tax revenues)
- Attract and retain residents and businesses
- Catalyze neighborhood revitalization
- Increase tourism

Quality of Life Benefits

- Encourage social interaction and build a community
- Increase exercise opportunities. Physical activity makes people healthier and reduces health care costs.
- Improve psychological health through contact with nature
- Provide important play opportunities (For kids, play is learning.)
- An opportunity to reduce juvenile crime and develop life skills



Community Description

Community Description

Plan Jurisdiction and Focus

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update (2010 - 2015) was prepared to guide future decisions on park land, recreation facilities and open space in the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan including:

- 1,209 acres in 71 city-owned park sites²; and
- 350 acres in 48 park-school sites.³

Planning Context

Grand Rapids' Parks and Recreation Master Plan was developed as an integral part of the process for updating the community's 2002 citywide Master Plan, a process initiated in 2008. While the 2002 Master Plan is still considered a sound policy foundation, new issues had emerged that called for community discussion. A number of these issues related directly to parks and recreation including:

- Significant reductions in funding to support park and recreation facilities and programming;
- The consolidation and disposal of public school sites resulting in reductions in the overall park inventory (park-schools) and concerns about the

- equitable distribution of park land;
- A desire to expand the recreational use of the Grand River, both as a greenway corridor and a destination; and
- A growing interest in community gardens and expanded access to fresh, local food.

Other issues related to the context in which priorities for park and recreation investments are established include:

- A growing demand for improved non-motorized connections and a "complete street" design and management approach to link parks and recreation opportunities, encourage healthy lifestyles and reduce the community's "carbon footprint;"
- A continued concern for improving water quality through sustainable design; and



² Not including 2 park sites Aman Park at 331 acres and Provin Trails at 47 acres (totaling 378 acres) located outside of the city boundaries.

³ Sites owned by the Grand Rapids Public Schools, but jointly developed with the City and used by its residents. Does not include John Ball Park Zoo (100.74 acres) which offers GRPS programming, but is owned by Kent County.

- The anticipated loss of thousands of trees as a result of the Emerald Ash Borer and a heightened awareness of the value of the urban tree canopy.

These issues all shared a common thread – the importance of the city's "green infrastructure" and the environmental, economic and social benefits that it provides. As a result, the master plan update – called Green Grand Rapids – was structured to develop recommendations for protecting and restoring an interconnected system of environmental assets and green spaces that provides ecological, health and quality of life benefits to the city and its people.

To organize the planning process, green infrastructure issues were broken into six topic areas:

- **Natural Systems** – growth management and the protection of environmental resources including the urban forest canopy and water quality (with a focus on larger scale stormwater management strategies)
- **Greening** – greening of the street network (trees; stormwater management) and low impact development (LID) strategies in parks and on private development parcels
- **Connections** – on-street pedestrian and bicycle improvements, off-street trails and transit
- **The Grand River** – mixed use and open space development; the expansion of recreation opportunities and improving the ecological health of the river system
- **Parks and Recreation** – protecting and maintaining existing parks; meeting park acreage defi-

cits; programming priorities and sustainable funding strategies

- **Local Food** – community gardens and farmers' markets

Parks and Recreation Values

People in Grand Rapids want to capitalize on the potential of parks and open spaces to improve neighborhood quality of life, bring residents together and build organizational capacity and pride. Volunteer efforts to create a new playground, develop a community garden or help make a park a beautifully landscaped and maintained focal point can provide opportunities for residents to cooperate in creating tangible improvements in the quality of life on their street or in their neighborhood. Parks that provide close-to-home recreation expand opportunities to exercise to improve health, reduce obesity and control health care costs. New and improved open spaces that create an attractive residential environment or that are designed and programmed to draw people and activity, also improve property values and enhance an area's appeal for private investors. In addition, permeable surfaces, trees and native landscaping in parks and open spaces provide important ecological "services" and can enhance urban residents' understanding of, and appreciation for, natural systems and environmental stewardship.



Parks and Recreation Issues and Priorities

Despite the importance of parks, declining General Fund support for the Parks and Recreation Department has created tough challenges in maintaining recreation programs, facilities and park lands. In addition, school sites (owned by the Grand Rapids Public Schools, but included in the city's inventory of park acreage) have been lost over time as schools have been closed and properties sold to "right size" school operations and budgets. This has raised difficult questions on how to balance the use of limited resources to protect the inventory of park sites (by exercising the city's right-of-first-refusal on school sales) and, at the same time, provide an appropriate level of maintenance and programming at remaining city-owned parks. Grand Rapids has considered the option of selling park land to help meet budget shortfalls, but residents have strongly opposed such an approach.

New tools are needed to aid decision-makers in determining which areas of the city have insufficient park land, and

where school sites are critical to its equitable distribution. Strategies for funding park acquisitions and improvements – especially in providing the local matching funds required by many grant programs -- are also required. In addition, new partnership and funding strategies are needed for park maintenance. Recognizing these important issues, Green Grand Rapids participants have identified the need to address deficits in accessible park acreage and the maintenance of existing parks as top priorities. Extending the existing riverwalk from Millennium Park to Riverside Park and expanded recreational programming for residents of all ages were also among the top four priorities in the Green Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation topic.



Administrative Structure

Administrative Structure

This section describes how park and recreation activities are carried out within the City of Grand Rapids, including a description of the Parks and Recreation Department, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, an agreement with the Grand Rapids Public School District, and collaborations (which include a new partnership with Friends of Grand Rapids Parks). Budget information, including a description of the sources of funding, is also provided.

State Legislation

Public Act 156 of 1917 entitled Local Government, Public Recreation System; Powers of Municipality is an act authorizing Cities, Villages, Counties, Townships, and School Districts to operate systems of public recreation and playgrounds.⁴

Section 1. Any City, Village, County, or Township may:

1. Operate a system of public recreation and playgrounds;
2. Acquire, equip, and maintain land, buildings, or other recreational facilities;
3. Employ a superintendent of recreation and assistants; and,
4. Vote and expend funds for the operation of such a system.



City of Grand Rapids

In addition, Parks and Recreation is governed by Title III, Section 3.1 to 3.27 of the Grand Rapids Municipal Code. The purpose of these provisions is to authorize the Director of Parks and Recreation, under the supervision and control of the City Manager, to promulgate rules and regulations relative to the use of areas and facilities which are declared recreational areas and in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan and other areas or facilities as may be designated by the City Commission to be under the jurisdiction of the Department of Parks and Recreation, subject to the approval of the City Commission.

The City of Grand Rapids has a City Manager form of government with six elected City Commissioners and a Mayor. Parks and Recreation falls under Community Services, Public Services Department and provides recreation facilities and services for Grand Rapids residents.

⁴ Summary of Laws Relating to Local Parks and Recreation, State of Michigan 1978. MSU Dec. 1978.

City of Grand Rapids Organizational Chart

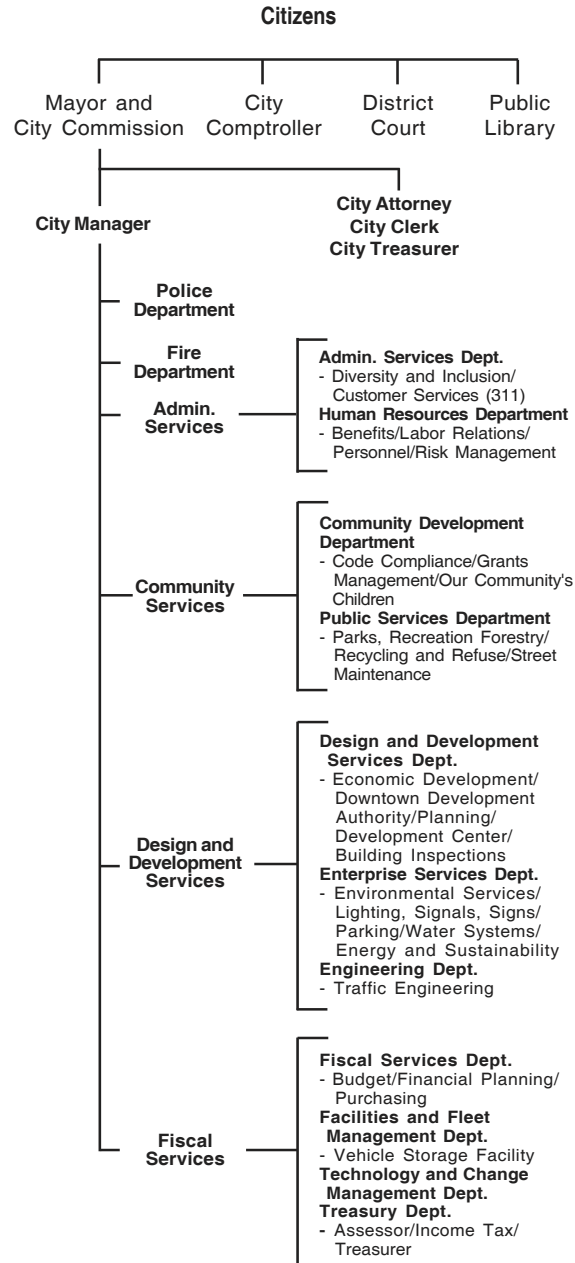


Figure 1

Parks, Recreation and Forestry Business Unit

The Parks, Recreation and Forestry Business Unit Department consists of three main service groups: administrative and support, recreation, and operations and maintenance.

Administrative and Support

The administrative and support staff are charged with the task of carrying out goals and objectives outlined in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Administrative and support staff oversee and participate in all functions of the department.

Recreation

The primary purpose of the Recreation Division is the provision of a diversified schedule of year-round activities to meet the leisure time needs of children, youth, and adults throughout the community. In addition, the recreation staff is responsible for coordinating individuals, equipment, and facilities in a detailed fashion to ensure smooth delivery of quality programs.

Operations and Maintenance

The Operations and Maintenance Division is responsible for the routine maintenance, repairs and minor construction activities associated with the City's parks, public spaces, urban forest, outdoor art and memorials. Employing both permanent and seasonal staff, this division maintains and operates athletic fields, restroom buildings, swimming and wading pools, playgrounds, miles of irrigation systems, trees and trails. In addition, labor support is provided for recreation programs within the parks as well as snow removal activities in the winter.

Staffing Level Comparison to Other Municipalities

In 2009, The Trust for Public Land issued a report compiling park information for the 77 most populous cities in the United States. The City Park Facts report documents basic information on urban park systems- including acreage, facilities, staffing, usership, and more. Of the cities studied, the number of employees per 10,000 residents ranged from 1.1 to 16.9, with a median of 6.0. Grand Rapids does not compare well, with only 1.1 regular, non-seasonal parks and recreation employees per 10,000 residents. This severely constrains the Department's ability to serve the city's residents and their parks and recreation needs.

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board was established under City Commission Policy No. 1100-07. The Board recommends policies, rules and regulations for the public use of parks and recreation facilities and programs. The Board assists the Director of Parks and Recreation in the evaluation of the City's parks and recreation programs and activities. The Board also suggests changes in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The Board is comprised of seven voting members who must be City residents and have an interest in supporting parks and recreation services as well as a student member who does not have voting rights. Members are appointed by the City Commission and serve a term of three years. A member of the Parks and Recreation Advisory board served as co-chair of the Green Grand Rapids Advisory Committee.

Grand Rapids Public School District

In 1951, the Grand Rapids Public Schools and City of Grand Rapids entered into an agreement calling for the joint development of, and use of, park-school facilities at sites where such development and use would serve the needs of both public park recreation users and students. The essence of this agreement calls for the cost of site development to be shared and for the establishment of an economical approach to outdoor facility maintenance. This agreement has been refined and re-adopted several times since its initial adoption. The current agreement, made in October of 2008, is in effect until October 31, 2011, with two 3-year renewal options, although either party has the ability to terminate the agreement with advance notification.



Collaborations

The Parks and Recreation Department collaborates and partners with a large variety of entities in order to provide comprehensive facilities and programs to residents of Grand Rapids. The following list identifies the large majority of these established relationships:

- Aberdeen Reformed Church
- Aquinas College
- Baxter Community Center
- Berkley Hills
- Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Michigan
- Boston Square CRC
- Boy and Girl Scouts
- Church of the Servant
- Clemente Park Skateboard Organization
- Faith Lutheran Church
- Friends of Grand Rapids Parks
- Grand Rapids BMX
- Grand Rapids Art Museum
- Grand Rapids Childrens Museum
- Grand Rapids Community College
- Grand Rapids Community Television
- Grand Rapids Police and Fire Departments
- Grand Rapids Public Schools
- Grand Rapids Rowing Association
- Grand Rapids School of Ballet
- Grand Valley State University
- Griff's Ice House
- Hoops City Basketball
- Jubilee Jobs
- Kendall College of Art & Design

- Kent County Health Department
- Little Caesar's
- Little LEague Baseball
- Meijer
- Michigan State University Extension
- North Park Presbyterian Church
- Our Community's Children
- Project Cool
- Salvation Army
- Senior Neighbors
- SportsPower
- Steepletown
- Various Neighborhood and Business Associations
- West Michigan Environmental Action Council
- West Michigan Fencing Academy
- West Michigan Sports Commission
- Western Chapter of the Michigan Mountain Biking Association
- YMCA

Friends of Grand Rapids Parks

The Parks and Recreation Department has begun a partnership with the grassroots nonprofit enterprise. Friends of Grand Rapids Parks, in addition to its other various community partners. Friends of Grand Rapids Parks is an independent, citizen-led, nonprofit group founded in 2008 to protect, enhance and expand parks and public spaces in Grand Rapids. Their goal is to help Grand Rapids rebuild and sustain an exceptional system of parks and public spaces and, by extension, increase home values, improve citizen health, safeguard air and water quality and strengthen the community's ability to retain and attract

residents, businesses and visitors. Friends of Grand Rapids Parks has been an important vehicle in coordinating the combined efforts of the City, neighborhood associations, public schools, nonprofits, private businesses, and other entities within the City, to raise awareness of the importance of parks, to recruit volunteers, and generate resources to benefit the parks and the community as a whole.

Since the partnership between the Parks and Recreation Department and Friends of Grand Rapids Parks began, volunteer efforts have been successful at various parks. A number of landscaping and/or spruce-up projects have been completed and events, such as, NeighborWoods (an informative event to raise awareness about the importance of trees in the City) and Park(ing) Day (participants create green space in a parking space for a day to celebrate urban open space) have been held. It is anticipated that the number of volunteer efforts will increase in the next five years.

Budget Analysis

In 2006, the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Commission on Parks and Recreation (Blue Ribbon Commission) was created to develop a plan with short- and long-term strategies to financially sustain the Parks and Recreation Department. The Blue Ribbon Commission developed 22 cost cutting and revenue generating strategies. To date, 16 strategies have been actively pursued and/or implemented, some of which include: private/public partnerships, volunteer maintenance, adopt-a-park program, and the formation of a new non-profit organization called Friends of Grand

Rapids Parks. In addition, the following strategies will be aggressively pursued in the upcoming year(s): native landscaping/green buildings/energy savings, advertising, grants, and sponsorships.

The following table shows the Parks and Recreation Department's budget for Fiscal Years 2010-2011. Revenues include: general fund, gifts, sponsorships, and grants. General Fund revenues include fees collected from recreation programs, equipment rentals, facility reservations, swimming pools, and advertising. Expenditures include: general fund, grants, trusts, and capital.

Parks and Recreation Department Budget Summary

	FY10	FY11 Adopted
Revenues		
After School Programs	2,068,142	2,109,789
Aquatics	241,978	382,720
Park Maintenance	65,150	53,377
Recreation	393,672	415,750
TOTAL	2,768,942	2,961,636
Expenses		
After School Programs	2,949,452	2,666,551
Aquatics	1,217,315	585,489
Park Maintenance	3,254,481	2,766,698
Recreation	503,500	588,594
TOTAL	7,924,748	6,607,332

Figure 2



CANAL PARK

CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS



PARKS
& REC
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PLAN

Recreation Inventory

Recreation Inventory

The City of Grand Rapids owns and maintains over 1,200 acres of parkland within the City limits. An additional 350 plus acres of Grand Rapids Public School property also provides public space for recreation and leisure activities within the City. A review of facilities, including site visits, was done in 2008/2009 by both the City and Grand Rapids Public Schools in order to accurately report the amenities available at each park (see Figures 9 and 10).

The following inventory of the City's parks (both municipal park land and public school land) is organized according to the Michigan DNR Recommended Classification System, which was adapted from the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) guide for recreation standards.

Park Classification System	General Description	Location Criteria	Size Criteria
Mini-Park	Used to address limited, isolated or unique recreational needs.	Less than ¼ mile distance in residential setting.	Between 2,500 sq. ft. and 1 acre in size.
Neighborhood Park	Remains the basic unit of the park system and serves as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. Focus is on informal active and passive recreation.	¼ to ½ mile distance and uninterrupted by non-residential roads & physical barriers.	5 acres is considered minimum size. 5 to 10 acres is optimal.
Community Park	Serves broader purpose than neighborhood park. Focus is on meeting community-based recreation needs, as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces.	Determined by the quality and suitability of the site. Usually serves two or more neighborhoods and ½ to 3 mile distance.	As needed to accommodate desired uses. Between 30 and 50 acres.

Figure 3

Park Classification System (cont.)	General Description	Location Criteria	Size Criteria
Large Urban Park	Serves broader purpose than community park. Focus is on meeting regional-based recreational needs, as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces.	Determined by the quality and suitability of the site. Usually serves the entire community.	As needed to accommodate desired uses. 50 to 75 acres.
Special Use	A broad range of parks and recreation facilities oriented toward single-purpose use.	Variable- dependent on specific use.	Variable.



Aman Park (331 acres) is also considered a large urban park; however, the acres are not included in the City's inventory because the park is located outside of Grand Rapids' city limits.

Large Urban Parks

Nine facilities within the City of Grand Rapids have been categorized as Large Urban Parks due to their size and/or unique amenities they provide. This includes three high schools and six public parks. These parks generally serve the entire county.

Park Name	Existing Acreage
Ball Perkins Park	80.11
Butterworth Park	129.25
Creston High	6.29
Huff Park	87.45
MacKay/Jaycee Family Park	69.8
Ottawa Hills High	21.2
Richmond Park	57.05
Riverside Park	180.95
Union High/Westwood Middle	54.73
Grand Total	686.83

Figure 4

Community and Special Use Parks

46 public parks and school properties within the City have been designated as either community or special use parks due to their size, amenities and/or uniqueness. These parks generally serve a city quadrant, but some also serve the entire county.

Park Name	Existing Acreage
Aberdeen Park	9.19
Ah-Nab-Awen Park	6.78
Alger Middle School	7.39
Baldwin Park	0.17
Belknap Park	24.56
Bike Park	16.63
Blandford Nature Center	11.07
Briggs Park	10.73
Burton Elementary & Middle	1.41
Burton Woods	5.97
Calder Plaza	4.43
Campau Park	7.27
Canal Street Park	4.41
Central/Fountain U-Prep	3.9
City High/Middle School	27.34
Fish Ladder Park	3.4
Fourth Street Woods	4.74
Fulton Street Market	2.43
Garfield Park	29.34
Harrison Park Elem Math/Science	8.03
Heartside Park	2.99
Highland Park	27.92
Hillcrest Park	14.43
Hosken Park	0.003
Houseman Field	9.62

Park Name	Existing Acreage
Indian Trails Golf Course	83.74
Ken-O-Sha Park/Plaster Cr. Trail	141.12
Lincoln Park	12.45
Louis Campau Promenade	0.6
Lyon Square	0.27
Martin Luther King Park	16.94
Monument Park	0.2
Mulick Park	9.95
Paul I. Phillips Recreation Center	0.32
Plaster Creek Family Park	34.58
Raspberry Field	2.97
Reservoir Park	7.35
Riverside Middle	15.71
Riverwalk Trails	0.6
Roosevelt Park	8.25
Rosa Parks Circle	0.59
Shawnee Park Elementary	8.26
Sixth Street Bridge Park	4.26
Southwest Community Campus	0.93
Sullivan Field	5.5
Veteran's Memorial Park	1.61
Grand Total	600.353

John Ball Zoo (100.74 acres) and Provin Trails (45.96 acres) are also considered community and special use parks. These acres are not included in the City's inventory because Provin Trails is jointly owned with Kent County and John Ball Zoo is owned by Kent County. These sites are included in the park accessibility assessment (figures 9 and 10) due to the unique programming and agreements between Kent County, Grand Rapids Public Schools, and the City of Grand Rapids.

Figure 5

Neighborhood Parks

The City has 49 facilities, including 15 public parks and 34 public schools, which have been categorized as neighborhood parks due to their size and/or amenities which they offer. These parks generally serve a neighborhood and may serve a city quadrant.

Park Name	Existing Acreage
Aberdeen Elementary	7.58
Alexander Elementary	2.11
Beckwith Elementary	8.77
Brookside Elementary	9.7
Buchanan Elementary	2.02
CA Frost Elementary	9.82
Cambridge Park	7.77
Camelot Park	5.04
Campau Park Elementary	2.25
Cesar E. Chavez Elementary	1.16
Cherry Park	1.05
Clemente Park	11.91
Coit Elementary	1.32
Coit Park	4.16
Congress Elementary	3.32
Covell Elementary	9.37
Dickinson Elementary	.84
Dickinson Park	4.0
Douglas Park	0.79
East Leonard Elementary	5.73
Eastern Elementary*	3.09
Franklin Campus for Arts/Lit	0.74
Fuller Park	11.41
Gerald R. Ford Middle	8.5
Jefferson Elementary	1.82

Park Name	Existing Acreage
Ken-O-Sha Park Elementary	6.38
Kensington Elementary/Adelante High School	2.07
Kensington Park	10.12
Kent Hills Elementary	13.1
Martin Luther King Leadership Academy	1.65
Mary Waters Park	9.94
Mid-Town Green	1.48
Mulick Park Elementary	4.01
North Park Elementary	9.42
Oakdale Elementary*	3.71
Oxford Park (undeveloped)	9.48
Palmer Elementary	2.60
Pleasant Park	2.30
Shawmut Hills Elementary	13.11
Sherwood Park Elementary	11.84
Sibley Elementary	4.67
SE Academic Center at Sigsbee Park Elementary	2.31
Stocking Elementary	2.43
Teacher Training Center at Hillcrest Elementary	2.87
Wellerwood ISD Early Childhood Center	10.97
West Leonard Elementary	1.86
Westown Commons	1.07
Wilcox Park	12.67
Grand Total	264.33

*Property is currently for sale

Figure 6

Mini Parks

Fifteen parks within the city have been classified as mini-parks. These parks generally serve a neighborhood.

Park Name	Existing Acreage
Alexander Park	0.57
Caulfield Playground	0.33
Cheseboro Park	0.34
Crescent Park	1.06
Foster Park	0.24
Heritage Hill Park	0.18
Joe Taylor Park	1.65
Look Out Park	1.98
Mooney Park	0.35
Pekich Park	0.10
Nagold Park	0.64
Paris Park	0.29
Seymour Park	0.27
Sundial park	0.005
Sweet Street park	0.48
Grand Total	8.485



Figure 7

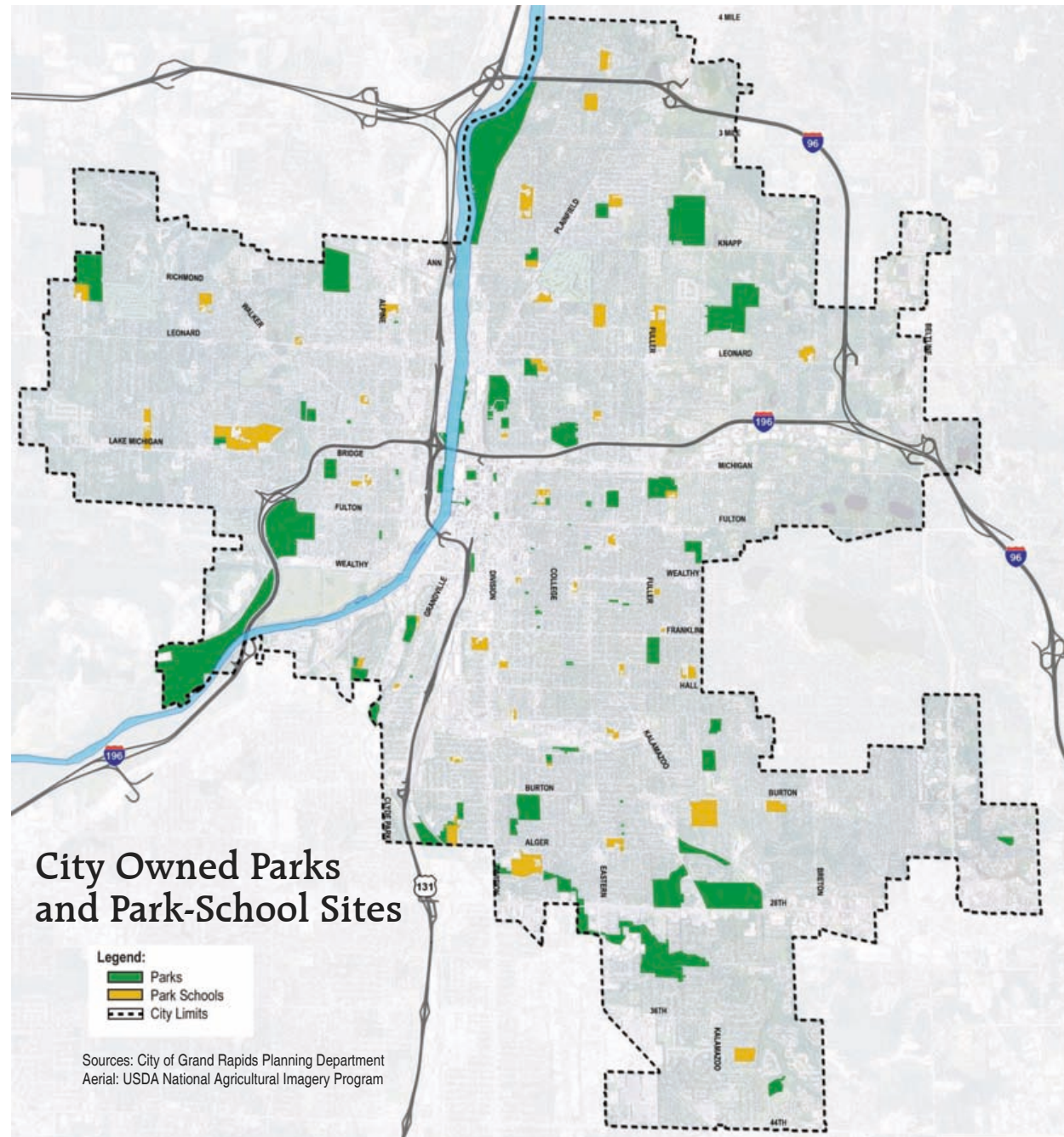


Figure 8



Park Accessibility Assessment

With the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), all areas of public service, including parks and other recreational facilities are subject to barrier-free requirements. In accordance with the Michigan DNR standards, facilities were evaluated to determine if:

- 1 - none of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines
- 2 - some of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines
- 3 - most of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines
- 4 - the entire park meets accessibility guidelines
- 5 - the entire park was developed/renovated using the principals of universal design

The accessibility assessment takes into consideration the accessibility of both the facilities themselves, as well as the access routes to them. Due to recent fiscal constraints, park improvements have not been constructed as aggressively as desired. However, when improvements are made, making the park barrier-free is always taken into consideration and remains a priority.

The following two tables (Figure 9 showing city-owned parks and Figure 10 showing park-school sites) identify the acreage, accessibility assessment, and the type of recreation and support facilities available at each park.

Figure 9: City Owned Parks and Public Spaces

Park	Acreage	Park Classification	Accessibility Assessment	Parking	Restrooms	Lodge Bldg w/Gym	Enclosed Shelterhouse w/restroom	Reservable Picnic Shelter	Picnic Shelter	Picnic Tables	Grills	Community Garden	Natural Area	Playground	Walking Path/Trails	XC Skiing	Sledding	Ice Rink	Gymnasium	Ball Diamond	Basketball	Soccer Field	Football Field	Swimming Pool	Wading Pool	Water Playground	Tennis Courts	Volleyball Court	Disc Golf	Undeveloped	Mountain Bike Skills Area/Pump Track	BMX and Singletack Trails	Skateboard Equipment	Dog Park
Aberdeen	9.19	C	3	X	X				X	X				X						1	X				X	6								
Ah Nab Awen	6.78	C	3		X					X																								
Alexander	0.57	M	2							X				X																				
*Aman	331	U	2	X						X			X		X																			
Baldwin	0.17	C	2																											X				
Ball Perkins	80.11	U	2									X	X																	X				
Belknap	24.56	C	2	X	X													X		2						10								
Bike Park	16.63	C	2	X																											X	X		
Briggs	10.73	C	2	X						X	X			X							X			X										
Burton Woods	5.97	C	2										X		X															X				
Butterworth	129.25	U																																
Calder Plaza	4.43	C	2							X																								
Cambridge	7.77	N	2						X	X										1		X												
Camelot	5.04	N	2							X				X							X													
Campau	7.27	C	2	X	X				X	X	X			X						1	X	X		X	X		2							
Canal St	4.41	C	2	X	X					X				X	X																			
Caulfield Playground	0.33	M	2							X				X																				
Cherry	1.05	N	2		X					X				X							X			X		1								
Cheseboro	0.34	M	2											X																				
Clemente	11.91	N	2	X	X				X	X	X									1		X											X	
Coit	4.16	N	2							X				X						1	X													
Crescent	1.06	M	3							X																								
Dickinson	4	N	2							X				X							X													

Figure 9: City Owned Parks and Public Spaces cont.

Park	Acreage	Park Classification	Accessibility Assessment	Parking	Restrooms	Lodge Bldg w/Gym	Enclosed Shelterhouse w/restroom	Reservable Picnic Shelter	Picnic Shelter	Picnic Tables	Grills	Community Garden	Natural Area	Playground	Walking Path/Trails	XC Skiing	Sledding	Ice Rink	Gymnasium	Ball Diamond	Basketball	Soccer Field	Football Field	Swimming Pool	Wading Pool	Water Playground	Tennis Courts	Volleyball Court	Disc Golf	Undeveloped	Mountain Bike Skills Area/Pump Track	BMX and Singletrack Trails	Skateboard Equipment	Dog Park		
Douglas	0.79	N	2							X				X							X															
Fish Ladder	3.4	C	2	X	X					X																										
Foster	0.24	M	2																																	
Fourth St Woods	4.74	C	2										X	X																						
Fuller	11.41	N	2	X	X					X				X						1	X					1										
Fulton St Market	2.43	C	2	X	X																															
Garfield	29.34	C	3	X	X	X		X		X	X			X				X	2	X				X		3	X	X								
Heartside	2.99	C	2						X	X	X	X		X							X				X											
Heritage Hill	0.18	M	2																																	
Highland	27.92	C	2	X	X					X	X			X			X		1		X		X													
Hillcrest	14.43	C	2																1															X		
Hosken	0.003	C	2																																	
Huff	87.45	U	2	X	X				X	X	X		X	X	X				5																	
Indian Trails Golf Course	83.74	C	2	X	X																															
Joe Taylor	1.65	M	2							X				X																						
Ken-O-Sha/Plaster Creek Trail	141.12	C	2		X										X				1						X											
Kensington	10.12	N	2							X				X					1		X															
Lincoln	12.45	C	3	X			X			X	X			X					1	X			X			2										
Look-out	1.98	M	2																																	

Figure 9: City Owned Parks and Public Spaces cont.

Park	Acreage	Park Classification	Accessibility Assessment	Parking	Restrooms	Lodge Bldg w/Gym	Enclosed Shelterhouse w/restroom	Reservable Picnic Shelter	Picnic Shelter	Picnic Tables	Grills	Community Garden	Natural Area	Playground	Walking Path/Trails	XC Skiing	Sledding	Ice Rink	Gymnasium	Ball Diamond	Basketball	Soccer Field	Football Field	Swimming Pool	Wading Pool	Water Playground	Tennis Courts	Volleyball Court	Disc Golf	Undeveloped	Mountain Bike Skills Area/Dunes Trail	Singletrack Trails	Skateboard Equipment	Dog Park
Louis Campau Promenade	0.6	C	2																															
Lyon Square	0.27	C	2																															
MacKay/Jaycee Family	69.8	U	2	X	X			X		X	X			X	X					4	X	X				4								
Martin Luther King	16.94	C	2	X	X	X				X	X			X						2	X			X	X		8							
Mary Waters	9.94	N	3	X	X					X				X						1	X					X								
Mid Town Green	1.48	N	2																															
Monument	0.2	C	3																															
Mooney	0.35	M	2											X																				
Mulick	9.95	C	2	X	X					X							X			1						X	3							
Nagold	0.64	M	2																											X				
Oxford	9.48	N	2																											X				
Paris	0.29	M	2																											X				
Paul I Phillips Rec Center	0.32	C	2		X														X															
Pekich	0.10	M	4																															
Plaster Creek Family	34.58	C	2	X	X				X					X						3							5							
Pleasant	2.30	N																												X				
*Provin Trails	45.96	C	2	X											X	X																		
Reservoir	7.35	C	2	X																														
Richmond	57.05	U	2	X	X		X	X		X	X		X	X			X			2	X			X	X		3							
Riverside	180.95	U	2	X	X			X		X	X			X	X					7		X							X					
Riverwalk Trails	0.6	C	2												X																			
Roosevelt	8.25	C	2	X		X								X					X															

Figure 9: City Owned Parks and Public Spaces cont.

Park	Acreage	Park Classification	Accessibility	Parking	Restrooms	Lodge Bldg w/Gym	Enclosed Shelterhouse w/restroom	Reservable Picnic	Picnic Shelter	Picnic Tables	Grills	Community Garden	Natural Area	Playground	Walking Path/Trail	XC Skiing	Sledding	Ice Rink	Gymnasium	Ball Diamond	Basketball	Soccer Field	Football Field	Swimming Pool	Wading Pool	Water Playground	Tennis Courts	Volleyball Court	Disc Golf	Undeveloped	Mountain Bike Skills Area/Pump Track	Singletrack Trails	Skateboard Equipment	Dog Park
Rosa Parks Circle	0.59	C	2		X																													
Seymour	0.27	M	2																															
Sixth St Bridge	4.26	C	2	X	X				X	X					X																			
Sullivan Field	5.5	C	2		X															1														
Sundial	0.005	M	2																															
Sweet St	0.48	M	3											X																				
Veteran’s Memorial	1.61	C	3																															
Westtown Commons	1.07	N	2		X									X							X			X										
Wilcox	12.67	N	2				X			X				X						1	X	X			X		4							
Total	1,210.008																																	

* = parks are located outside of City boundaries so are not accounted for in the acreage totals or assessment.

Park Classification Key:

C = Community and special use parks
M = Mini-park
N = Neighborhood park
U = Large urban park

Accessibility Assessment Key

This includes the accessibility of the facility itself as well as the access route to the facility:

- 1 = none of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines
- 2 = some of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines
- 3 = most of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines
- 4 = the entire park meets accessibility guidelines
- 5 = the entire park was developed/renovated using the principals of universal design

Figure 10: Park-School Sites

School	Acreage	Park Classification	Parking	Restrooms	Lodge Bldg w/Gym	Enclosed Shelterhouse w/restroom	Reservable Picnic Shelter	Picnic Shelter	Picnic Tables	Grills	Community Garden	Natural Area	Playground	Walking Path/Trail	XC Skiing	Sledding	Ice Rink	Gymnasium	Ball Diamond	Basketball	Soccer Field	Football Field	Swimming Pool	Wading Pool	Water Playground	Tennis Courts	Volleyball Court	Disc Golf	Undeveloped	Mountain Bike Skills Area/Pump	Singletrack Trails	Skateboard Equipment	Dog Park
Aberdeen Elementary	7.58	N	X					X	X				X						2	X													
Alexander Elementary	2.11	N	X										X							X													
Alger Middle	7.39	C	X	X				X	X				X	X					1	X	X				X	2							
Beckwith	8.77	N	X																1														
Blandford Nature Ctr	11.07	C		X							X	X		X																			
Brookside Elementary	9.7	N	X					X	X				X	X					1	X				X									
Buchanan Elementary	2.02	N	X						X				X							X	X			X									
Burton Elementary & Middle	1.41	C	X	X				X					X						1					X									
CA Frost Elementary	9.82	N	X						X				X							X	X												
Campau Park Elementary	2.25	N	X										X							X													
Central/Fountain-U-Prep	3.9	C	X						X				X					X		X													

* = Grand Rapids Public Schools offers programming at these sites; however, they are not owned by the City or GRPS so are not accounted for in acreage totals

TBR = To Be Removed

Figure 10: Park-School Sites cont.

School	Acreage	Park Classification	Parking	Restrooms	Lodge Bldg w/Gym	Enclosed Shelterhouse w/restroom	Reservable Picnic Shelter	Picnic Shelter	Picnic Tables	Grills	Community Garden	Natural Area	Playground	Walking Path/Trails	XC Skiing	Sledding	Ice Rink	Gymnasium	Ball Diamond	Basketball	Soccer Field	Football Field	Swimming Pool	Wading Pool	Water Playground	Tennis Courts	Volleyball Court	Disc Golf	Undeveloped	Mountain Bike Skills Area/Pump Track	Singletrack Trails	Skateboard Equipment	Dog Park
Cesar E Chavez Elementary	1.16	N	X										X							X	X												
City High/Middle	27.34	C	X																3	X	X					4							
Coit Creative Arts Academy	1.32	N	X										X							X													
Congress Elementary	3.32	N	X						X				X						1	X													
Covell Elementary	9.37	N	X										X						1	X													
Creston High	6.29	U	X															X	1	X						3							
Dickinson Elementary	0.84	N	X										X																				
East Leonard Elementary	5.73	N	X						X				X						1	X													
Eastern Elementary	3.09	N	X					X	X				X						1	X													
Franklin Campus Arts	0.74	N																															
Gerald R. Ford Middle	8.5	N	X					X	X				X						1	X	X				X	X							
Harrison Park Elementary & Middle	8.03	C	X					X	X				X							X	X					2							
Houseman Field	9.62	C	X						X				X																				

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TBR = To Be Removed

Figure 10: Park-School Sites

School	Acreage	Park Classification	Parking	Restrooms	Lodge Bldg w/Gym	Enclosed Shelterhouse w/restroom	Reservable Picnic Shelter	Picnic Shelter	Picnic Tables	Grills	Community Garden	Natural Area	Playground	Walking Path/Trails	XC Skiing	Sledding	Ice Rink	Gymnasium	Ball Diamond	Basketball	Soccer Field	Football Field	Swimming Pool	Wading Pool	Water Playground	Tennis Courts	Volleyball Court	Disc Golf	Undeveloped	Mountain Bike Skills Area/Pump Track	Singletrack Trails	Skateboard Equipment	Dog Park
Jefferson Elementary	1.82	N	X										X							X													
*John Ball Park Zoo	100.74	C																															
Ken-O-Sha Park Elem.	6.38	N	X						X			X	X						1	X													
Kensington Elementary	2.07	N	X	X				X	X											X				X									
Kent Hills Elementary –	13.1	N	X										X						1	X													
Martin Luther King Leadership Academy	1.65	N	X						X				X							X													
Mulick Park Elementary	4.01	N	X						X				X							X													
North Park Elem & Montes	9.42	N	X	X									X						1	X	X			X		4							
Oakdale Elementary	3.71	N	X	X				X	X				X						1	X					X								
Ottawa Hills High	21.2	U	X	X									X	X				X	2	X	X	X		X		6							
Palmer Elementary	2.6	N							X				X							X													

* = Grand Rapids Public Schools offers programming at these sites; however, they are not owned by the City or GRPS so are not accounted for in acreage totals

TBR = To Be Removed

Figure 10: Park-School Sites

School	Acreage	Park Classification	Parking	Restrooms	Lodge Bldg w/Gym	Enclosed Shelterhouse w/restroom	Reservable Picnic Shelter	Picnic Shelter	Picnic Tables	Grills	Community Garden	Natural Area	Playground	Walking Path/Trails	XC Skiing	Sledding	Ice Rink	Gymnasium	Ball Diamond	Basketball	Soccer Field	Football Field	Swimming Pool	Wading Pool	Water Playground	Tennis Courts	Volleyball Court	Disc Golf	Undeveloped	Mountain Bike Skills Area/Pump Track	Singletrack Trails	Skateboard Equipment	Dog Park
Raspberry Field	2.97	C																	1														
Riverside Middle N&S	15.71	C	X										X	X					1	X	X					X							
Shawmut Hills Elementary	13.11	N	X					X	X				X						1	X			X										
Shawnee Math/Science/ Tech	8.26	C	X					X	X				X						1	X													
Sherwood Park Global Studies	11.84	N	X						X				X	X					1	X	X						X						
Sibley Elementary	4.67	N	X										X							X	X												
Southeast Academic Center	2.31	N	X	X									X							X		X		X									
Southwest Community Campus	0.93	C	X										X							X													
Stocking Elementary	2.43	N	X	X				X	X				X						1	X			X										
Teacher Training Center	2.87	N	X										X						1	X													
Union High	54.73	U	X											X			X	X	2		X	X			8								

* = Grand Rapids Public Schools offers programming at these sites; however, they are not owned by the City or GRPS so are not accounted for in acreage totals

TBR = To Be Removed

Figure 10: Park-School Sites

School	Acreage	Park Classification	Parking	Restrooms	Lodge Bldg w/Gym	Enclosed Shelterhouse w/restroom	Reservable Picnic Shelter	Picnic Shelter	Picnic Tables	Grills	Community Garden	Natural Area	Playground	Walking Path/Trails	XC Skiing	Sledding	Ice Rink	Gymnasium	Ball Diamond	Basketball	Soccer Field	Football Field	Swimming Pool	Wading Pool	Water Playground	Tennis Courts	Volleyball Court	Disc Golf	Undeveloped	Mountain Bike Skills Area/Pump Track	Singletrack Trails	Skateboard Equipment	Dog Park
Wellerwood ISD Early CH	10.97	N																															
West Leonard	1.86	N	X										X							X													
Westwood Middle (acres incl. w/Union HS)	N/A	U	X										X						2	X													
TOTAL	349.99																																

* = Grand Rapids Public Schools offers programming at these sites; however, they are not owned by the City or GRPS so are not accounted for in acreage totals

TBR = To Be Removed

Park Classification Key:

C = Community and special use
parks

M = Mini-park

N = Neighborhood park

U = Large urban park

Unique Parks

As is indicated in the recreation inventory tables, there are many different amenities for residents and visitors to enjoy at parks throughout the city. Following is a brief description of some of the parks that are unique to Grand Rapids:

Rosa Parks Circle

Located in the heart of downtown Grand Rapids this park was designed by Maya Lin, an internationally renowned architect best known for designing the Vietnam Memorial in Washington D.C. The plaza area includes sculpture elements, an amphitheater, an outdoor (mechanically refrigerated) ice rink which is available to skating participants from December to March, and water and fog fountains. Rosa Parks Circle holds many events including Arts Festival, concert series such as the Blues on the Mall, Gospel and Baby Bands, and weekly swing dancing during the summer months.

Huff Park and Cattail Crossing

Located on 80-acres in the northern portion of the City at Aberdeen and Ball Streets, the park contains both active and passive recreation amenities including three ball diamonds, picnic areas, grills, and a 30-acre wetland trail that weaves through three distinct biospheres with paved pathways, boardwalks and interpretive signs. The natural habitat features a wide variety of wild flowers and wetland inhabitants in the midst of an urbanized area.

Belknap Park

Located in the central portion of the City, just north of the Coit neighborhood. The park provides two lighted ball diamonds, a volleyball court, and Griff's Ice House (which is

an indoor ice arena that is owned by the City but privately operated). Public skating is available at scheduled days and times for a fee.

Riverside Park

The largest park within the city limits is approximately 180-acres on the east side of the Grand River in the northern section of the city. The park has a wide variety of active and passive recreation opportunities including ball diamonds, soccer fields, disc golf course, picnicking, pathways, special events areas, trails, river access for boats and vistas for overlooking the river.

Riverwalk Parks and Pathways

The interconnected parks and pathways along the Grand River offer a continuous loop, on both sides of the Grand River from Fulton Street north to Sixth Street. Along this route are a variety of art-in-the-park sites as well as historic interpretive markers explaining significant events in Grand Rapids history.

Ah-Nab-Awen Park

This 6.8-acre park was once the site of a Native American Village. The development of this site began as a bicentennial project that involved extensive public design input. The name, "Ah-Nab-Awen" was proposed by the Elders of the Three Fires Council and means "Resting Place." The park exhibits numerous pieces of art and is often viewed in the context of the later addition to the site, the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum. The park hosts many large community-wide festivals including the July 4th fireworks and Celebration on the Grand.

Calder Plaza

This open, hard-surfaced plaza adjoins the City and County buildings in the heart of downtown Grand Rapids. The plaza hosts numerous large community events such as Festival, which attracts thousands of people downtown every year to celebrate the arts. Calder Plaza is home to the Alexander Calder stabile entitled "La Grande Vitesse," built in 1969, which serves as the logo of the City of Grand Rapids.

Fish Ladder Park

Designed by the artist Joseph Kinnebrew, this functional piece of art provides a practical application as well as aesthetic pleasure. Designed to allow migrating fish a means of circumventing the powerful water flow of the man-made rapids in the Grand River, this site also allows visitors to watch fish jump up the "ladder" during seasonal migration in the late spring and summer.

Burton Woods

Located in the southern portion of the city, between Madison and Division Streets, this six-acre wooded site has remained relatively untouched for the past 80 years and includes a series of unpaved walking trails.

Lookout Park

This small park is located on the hillside in the Coit neighborhood. This park provides a unique view to the south of downtown Grand Rapids, west towards Union High School and north to Comstock Park. The prominence of the Grand River as it flows through the City is readily apparent from this vantage point.

Swimming Pools, Wading Pools and Water Playgrounds

Six outdoor swimming pools are located at Briggs, Campau,

Highland, Lincoln, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Richmond Parks and are operated from mid-June through mid-August. Pools have waterslides and zero depth entry points. Concessions are available at Richmond, Briggs, and Martin Luther King, Jr. with picnic tables on site. In addition to these pools, the City also runs water playgrounds with various water toys.

Aberdeen Park

Located at Eastern and Evelyn Streets Northeast, Aberdeen Park includes a full range of active and passive recreational activities including picnicking, play area, ball diamond, soc-



cer field, tennis courts, basketball courts and a water playground.

Veteran's Memorial Park

Located at Fulton and Division in downtown Grand Rapids, this park is dedicated to the memory of those who served in the armed forces. Within the park are a number of monuments honoring fallen soldiers from Kent County. The park is host to the Grand Rapids Jaycees Patriot Day Parade, among other memorial services.

Bike Park

Located in the southwest portion of the city, this park features facilities for bicycle motocross, off-road bicycling including a pump track, skills area, and singletrack. A connection from the park to the non-motorized Plaster Creek Trail and Oxford Street Trail is planned.

Kent County Parks

In addition to City of Grand Rapids parks, there is some parkland located within the City limits that is owned by Kent County. Examples include Millennium Park and John Ball Park and Zoological Gardens. The Kent County Parks Department is responsible for managing 37 county parks, including L.E. Kaufman Golf Course, Wabasis Lake Campground and Kent trails. Following is a description of John Ball Park and Zoological Garden as this site has been included in the analysis for this plan. Other Kent County facilities in the general proximity of the city have not been included in the inventory analysis because the Parks and Recreation Department does not provide programming at these sites, but these facilities may be located in and/or serve residents of Grand Rapids.



John Ball Park and Zoological Garden

The John Ball Zoo was purchased from the City of Grand Rapids in 1989. The mission of the John Ball Zoo is to help all individuals gain information about, respect for, and an understanding of the animal kingdom by providing a quality zoological facility that promotes good animal husbandry, provides diverse educational opportunities, actively participates in local, state, and national conservation and research programs and achieves a significant breeding and reproductive record.

The Zoo is located on 100 acres at the corner of Fulton and Valley (1300 W. Fulton), just two miles west of downtown Grand Rapids. The Zoo and park offer many facilities including grills, picnic areas, baseball diamonds, tennis courts and play areas. The park serves as an essential recreation amenity, especially to those who live nearby. Access to the Kent Trails bike path is also provided on the south side of the park. Currently the animal collection at John Ball Zoo includes 237 species.



Other Parks

Other parks and facilities in and around the City of Grand Rapids that offer opportunities for recreation include:

Blandford Nature Center

Located in northwest Grand Rapids, Blandford Nature Center offers education and community programs to educate, engage, and empower people. Grand Rapids Public Schools uses Blandford Nature Center as a school for sixth graders. The Blandford School provides students with a unique opportunity to learn hands-on and the curriculum incorporates Blandford Nature Center's natural setting. Classroom experiences take place outside in the woods and ponds as much as inside the classroom. In addition, a program called 'Mixed Greens' teaches students in grades K-5 about local food, plant parts, plant needs, and gardening skills. Children in this program apply their lessons in a hands-on setting.

Other Communities

Several communities bordering Grand Rapids, such as, the City of Wyoming, City of Kentwood, City of Walker, East Grand Rapids, and Grand Rapids Township own and operate a variety of parks and facilities. These facilities are not included as a part of this plan's analysis because the Parks and Recreation Department does not offer programming at the sites; however, parks in these neighboring communities offer a broad range of recreation opportunities for residents of Grand Rapids.

Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Recreation Grant Inventory

The following table provides information about past grants that the City of Grand Rapids has obtained from the DNR

Development Grants

Acquisition/ Development Grant	Grant/ Project Number	Park Name	Facilities Constructed	Current Condition of Facilities	Facilities removed/ replaced
Dev.	26-00238	Comstock- Riverside Park	Develop river frontage to include 2 little league ball diamonds, toilet shelter, small playground, apparatus area and 5 acres of equipped picnic area.	Riverside Park is in good condition and is a highly used park. Numerous sporting events (soccer, baseball, etc.) and special events (picnics, weddings, etc.) are held at the park each year.	N/A
Dev.	26-00772	West Riverbank Park	Demolition, site improvement, lighting, landscaping, walks, ramps, steps, retaining walls, utilities, water system, park and picnic equipment, IWCF sign, restroom.	Good condition but restricted use due to ongoing behavior problems.	N/A
Dev.	26-01545	Garfield Park	Development of picnic shelter/restroom facility and improvements to existing picnic areas.	The picnic shelter and restroom facility at Garfield Park are in good condition. The picnic shelter is reserved often throughout the spring, summer, and fall seasons for various picnics and special events.	N/A

Figure 11

Development Grants

Acquisition/ Development Grant	Grant/ Project Number	Park Name	Facilities Constructed	Current Condition of Facilities	Facilities removed/ replaced
Dev.	BF00-196	Cambridge Park	Improve Cambridge Park ballfield by installing new fencing, dugouts, automated irrigation, grass infield, level and hydroseed outfield, and install new parking lot and asphalt paths. Project also includes seeding and grading of soccer field, and new benches.	The improvements made to Cambridge Park are holding up well.	N/A
Dev.	BF89-337	Neighborhood Playground (Sites include: Briggs, Cherry, Dickinson, Douglas, Fuller, Garfield, King, Lincoln, Mary Waters and Richmond	Replace playground equipment, paving and support amenities at ten inner-city locations. The playgrounds are deemed unsafe by current national standards. Project includes 10 playgrounds, basketball courts, walkway repairs and replacements, signage and site amenities.	The basketball courts at King Park are in need of repair, but are still able to be used by the public. The playground at Briggs is in fair shape. The playground at Cherry is in good shape.	N/A

Figure 11

Development Grants cont.

Acquisition/ Development Grant	Grant/ Project Number	Park Name	Facilities Constructed	Current Condition of Facilities	Facilities removed/ replaced
Dev.	BF89-338	Aberdeen Park Rehabilitation	Repair, replace, and renovate park area facilities at the park, built in 1957. Project includes restroom building, tennis courts, play equipment, parking, replacement of basketball court, walkways. Added fencing, signage, and site amenities.	Most of the amenities at Aberdeen Park are in good condition. The tennis courts are in need of repair, but are still usable.	N/A
Dev.	BF92-056	Burton Park	Develop new park entry drive, multi-use trail along creek, parking improvements, restroom and maintenance building and utilities, signage, lighting and play equipment, 3 tennis courts, picnic shelter and irrigation.	The park is in good condition and used quite often. The name was changed to Plaster Creek Family Park.	N/A
Dev.	BF93-172	7 Neighborhood Parks Rehabilitation	Replace 6 inaccessible outdated playground equipment, fencing, surface 6 basketball and 8 tennis courts, provide picnic areas, signage, site amenities and landscaping at 7 neighborhood parks.	Good condition, courts are in need of resurfacing.	N/A

Figure 11

Development Grants cont.

Acquisition/ Development Grant	Grant/ Project Number	Park Name	Facilities Constructed	Current Condition of Facilities	Facilities removed/ replaced
Dev.	BF94-089	Canal Avenue Park	Development for recreation of vacant industrial site, providing Grand River access, historic interpretation, open space, playground, restrooms, walk-bikeways, and parking. Project also includes lighting, benches, landscape, water and sanitation.	The park is in good shape. Due to condominium development in the area, this park and playground get used frequently. Walkways require some repair/patching, but are holding up well.	N/A
Dev.	CM00-372	Heartside Park	Development of a vacant site into a 3.2-acre park with basketball courts, a gazebo, picnic areas, a restroom, playgrounds, and open space. Project also includes water features, rubber play surfaces, trees, shrubs and walks and a trail.	The park is in good condition.	N/A
Dev.	TF87-201	Jaycee Family Park	Lighted softball diamonds, soccer field, tennis courts, outdoor racquet ball courts, handicapped emphasis playground, trail/walkways, restroom and parking.	Amenities at this park are in good condition. Soccer fields and ball diamonds are used regularly throughout the year for organized recreation leagues. Tennis courts are in fair shape and will need to be repaired or replaced in the next couple of years.	N/A

Figure 11

Development Grants cont.

Acquisition/ Development Grant	Grant/ Project Number	Park Name	Facilities Constructed	Current Condition of Facilities	Facilities removed/ replaced
Dev.	TF88-238	Sesquicentennial River	¼ mile paved, looped walk- way along river.	The constructed trail is in good condition and gets used regularly by pedestri- ans.	N/A
Dev.	TF91-089	Huff Park	Renovations to heavily pro- grammed softball fields, ir- rigation, fencing, picnicking area, play equipment, im- provements to parking and landscaping. Also includes signage, improved path- ways, and a footbridge.	Ball diamonds are in good shape and are used for or- ganized baseball/softball leagues regularly. Other amenities at the park are in decent condition and the park is heavily used..	N/A
Dev.	TF95-135	Plaster Creek Trail	Phase I development of a two-mile, ten foot wide, bi- tuminous paved, non-mo- torized trail along Plaster Creek from Kalamazoo Ave. to 28th Street. Project in- cludes 3 bicycle/pedestrian bridges, fishing decks, un- derpasses, grading/erosion control, and landscaping and restoration.	Overall the trail is in good shape. Occasional repairs have been necessary. The trail is very popular for both Grand Rapids and sur- rounding area residents and visitors.	N/A

Figure 11

Development Grants cont.

Acquisition/ Development Grant	Grant/ Project Number	Park Name	Facilities Constructed	Current Condition of Facilities	Facilities removed/ replaced
Dev.	BF96-091	Riverside Park Trail	Development of a 10-12 foot wide multi-use trail along both sides of the Grand River from Ann Street to North Park Street. Project includes clearing and grubbing, widening and asphalt application of existing trail, elevated boardwalks, 4 bicycle/pedestrian bridges, signage, erosion control/retaining walls, landscape, restoration and site furnishings.	The trail is in good condition and is heavily used by walkers, runners, and bicyclists.	N/A
Dev.	TF98-124	6th Street Bridge Park Renovations	Renovation and improvements in an existing park along the Grand River in downtown Grand Rapids to include new pathways and river edge lookouts, boat ramp, fish cleaning station and parking. Project also includes grading, site utilities, flood and retaining walls, concrete work, bituminous paths, parking lot, landscaping and site equipment.	The park is in good condition.	N/A

Figure 11

Acquisition Grants

Acquisition/ Development Grant	Grant/ Project Number	Park Name	Area of park required	How Park is being used	Current Condition of Facilities
Acquisition	26-00523	Comstock- Riverside Park	6 acres	Develop 6 acres: boat launch, parking facilities, 1 shelter restroom building, water/sewer and underground electrical utilities, 1 mile of foot trails, 2 foot bridges, landscaping, site improvements, shelter/restrooms building.	See development grant for update.
Acquisition	26-00591	Ken-O-Sha Park	6.7 acres	Acquire 6.7 acres of land in Ken-O-Sha park near the junction of Eastern Ave. and 28th Street.	Good condition
Acquisition	26-00791	Butterworth Riverfront	55 acres	Acquire 55 acres of land for outdoor recreation	Good condition
Acquisition	TF618	Blandford Nature Center	30 acres	Acquisition of 30 acres	The site is currently used by Grand Rapids Public Schools for programming

Figure 12

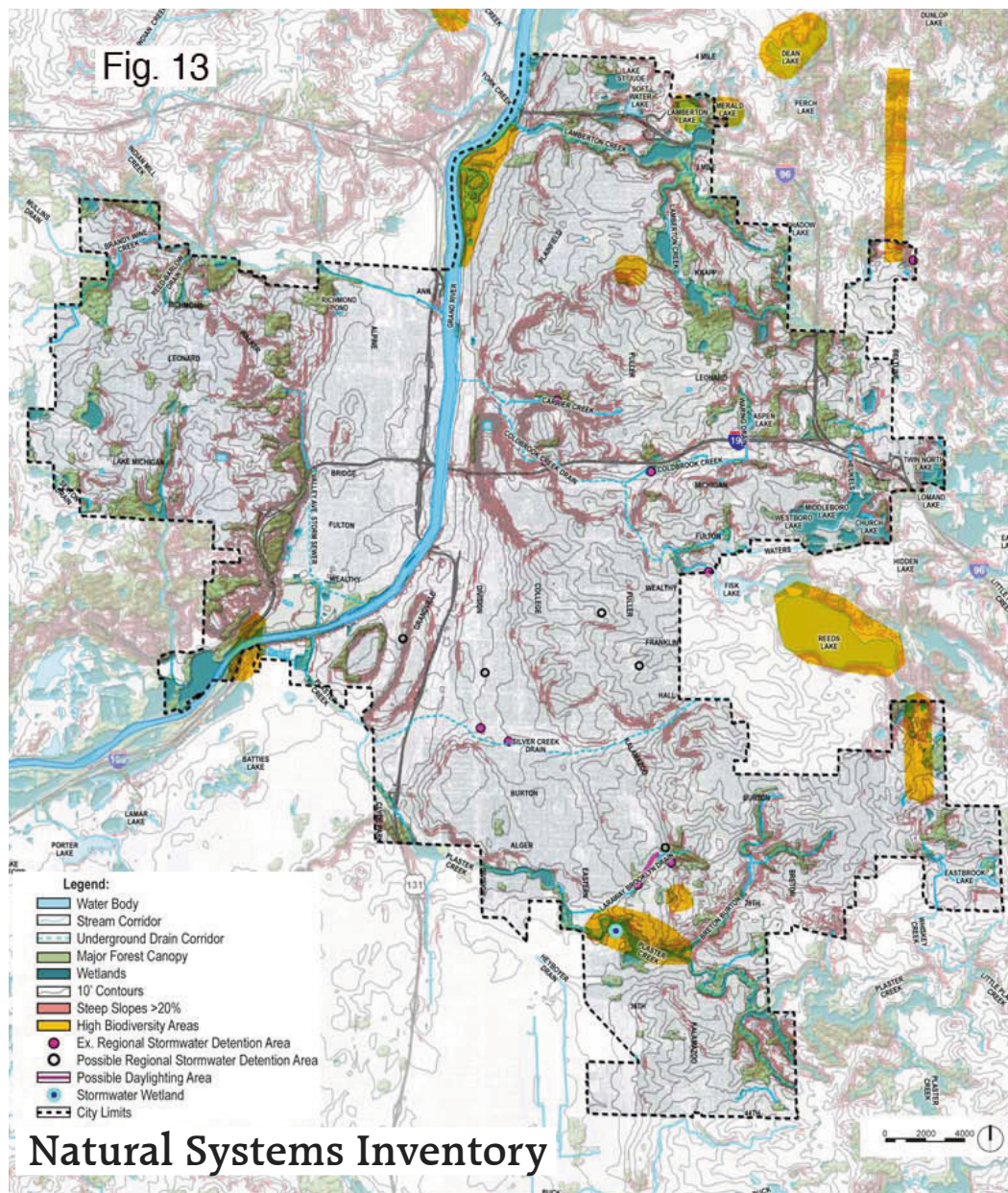
Acquisition Grants

Acquisition/ Development Grant	Grant/ Project Number	Park Name	Area of park required	How Park is being used	Current Condition of Facilities
Acquisition	TF95-133	Butterworth Bridge and Trail	10.4 acres	Acquisition of a bridge across Grand River, and 10.4 acres of approach, providing walk and bike access to recreation fa- cilities and downtown streets.	The area is being devel- oped as a non-motorized trail.

Figure 12



Resources Inventory



Resources Inventory

Green Grand Rapids developed a detailed inventory map of the city's natural systems including watersheds, river and stream corridors, wetlands and floodplains, steep slopes, wooded areas and high bio-diversity areas (see Figure 13, Natural Systems Inventory map, left). This inventory allows Grand Rapids' citizens and decision-makers to understand in some detail how the city's natural systems fit into the region's larger "green infrastructure" vision, defined by a task force created in 2003 by the West Michigan Strategic Alliance.

Green infrastructure is the network of connected open space, woodlands, wildlife habitat, parks and other natural areas that supports native species; maintains natural ecological processes to sustain clean air and water and contributes to the health and quality of life for communities and people.⁵ At the heart of the green infrastructure philosophy are the ideas that:

- The green space network, including publicly and privately owned lands, provides valuable economic benefits in the form of ecological "services" (including flood control and stormwater management) that can decrease the cost of "grey" (roadway or utility) infrastructure investment, while providing amenities that increase private property values (and property tax revenues);

⁵ Mark Benedict and Edward McMahon, *Green Infrastructure: Smart Conservation for the 21st Century*. The Conservation Fund.

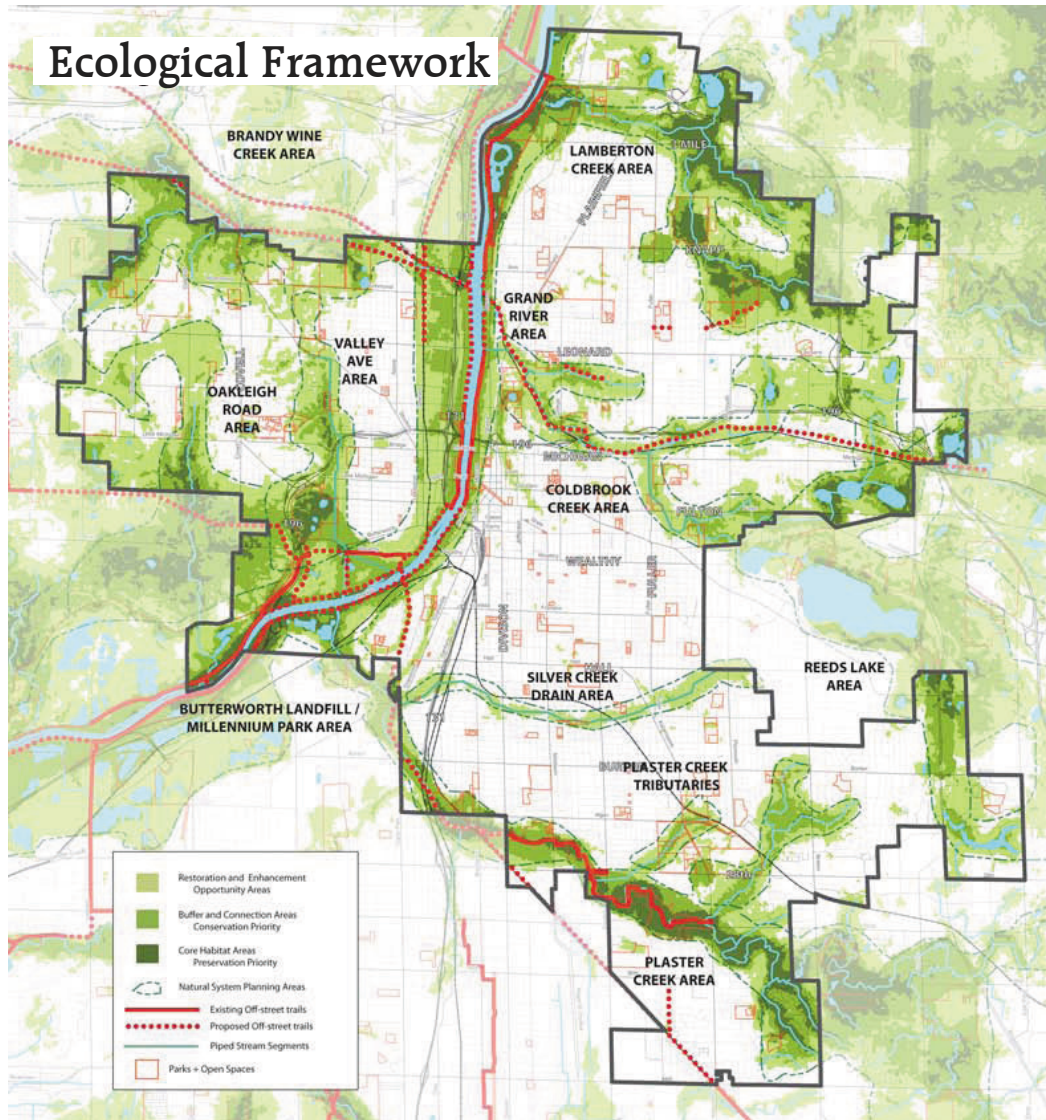


Figure 14

- The protection and restoration of natural systems should be viewed as a primary public investment, like a community's "grey" infrastructure; and
- This connected system should shape land use and development patterns, rather than being viewed as "left over" spaces.

Grand Rapids' regional-scale green infrastructure components are the Grand River, Plaster Creek and adjacent committed green spaces, including Riverside, Millennium and Ken-O-Sha Parks. At a city scale, additional high value resource areas that make up the city's green infrastructure include other tributary streams, wetlands, water bodies and wooded areas that can be connected to each other and the Grand River.

Ecological Framework

The Ecological Framework (see Figure 14) maps riparian corridors and buffers, hydric soils (floodplain and wetlands), high biodiversity areas, upland and lowland habitat areas, steep slopes and related buffer zones to illustrate Grand Rapids' green infrastructure network. The map also classifies areas/corridors into three priority categories: core habitat areas to preserve; buffer and connection areas to conserve and restoration/enhancement opportunity areas. Existing parks are outlined to illustrate the extent to which they protect critical open spaces. Existing and proposed off-street trails are also indicated to identify greenway corridors that can help to protect and connect key resource areas. Finally, natural resource planning areas are suggested to provide a structure for more detailed inventory and planning activities.

The Ecological Framework provides a starting point for discussion in setting priorities for land and/or easement acquisition, as well as for updating ordinances to better protect natural features and/or developing incentives for conservation and restoration. It also helped Green Grand Rapids participants to identify two top natural systems priorities: the restoration of riparian corridors along the Grand River and its tributary streams to protect water quality and the protection and enhancement of the city's urban forest canopy.

Riparian Corridors

Green Grand Rapids recommends using river-front parks and the riverwalk/greenway system as part of a comprehensive strategy for improving the quality of stream and river corridors by maintaining open space buffers to reduce the water quality impacts of stormwater runoff and to provide wildlife habitat.⁶ To help achieve this objective, River Corridor Guidelines were developed to address the preservation and improvement of riparian buffers and the restoration of stream and river banks. The guidelines provide principles and tools for protecting water quality, enhancing habitat, reducing flooding and improving the visual quality and recreational use of Grand Rapids' rivers and tributary stream corridors.

⁶ This comprehensive strategy also includes a continued focus on low impact development strategies (LID) in reviewing and updating existing City policies and ordinances, in educating the community on actions individuals can take and in designing public projects (including streets, as well as parks and trails).

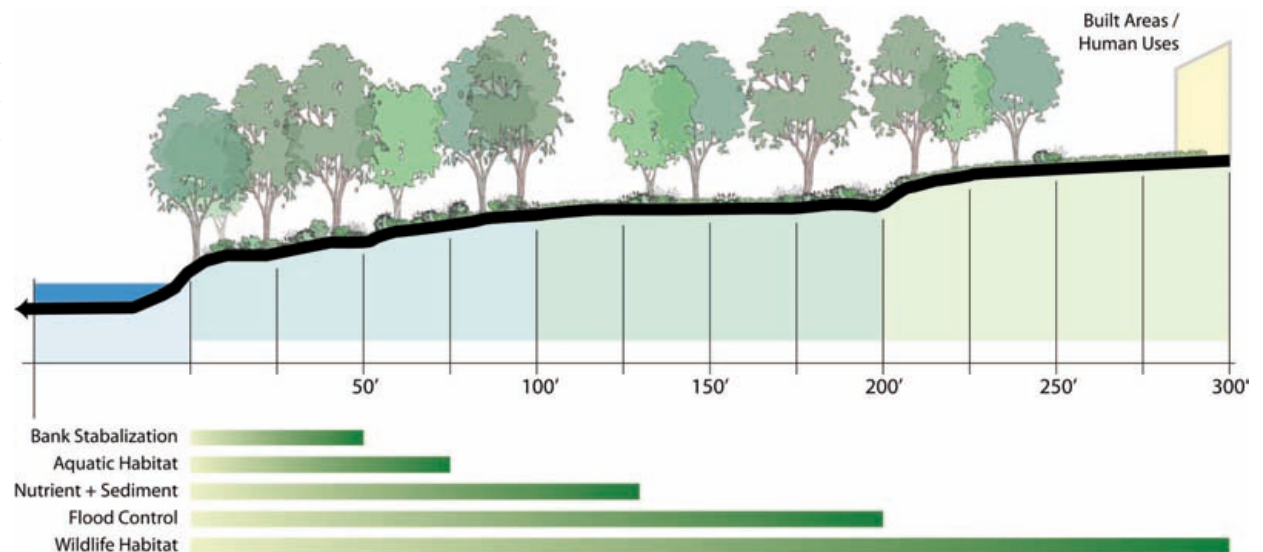


Figure 15

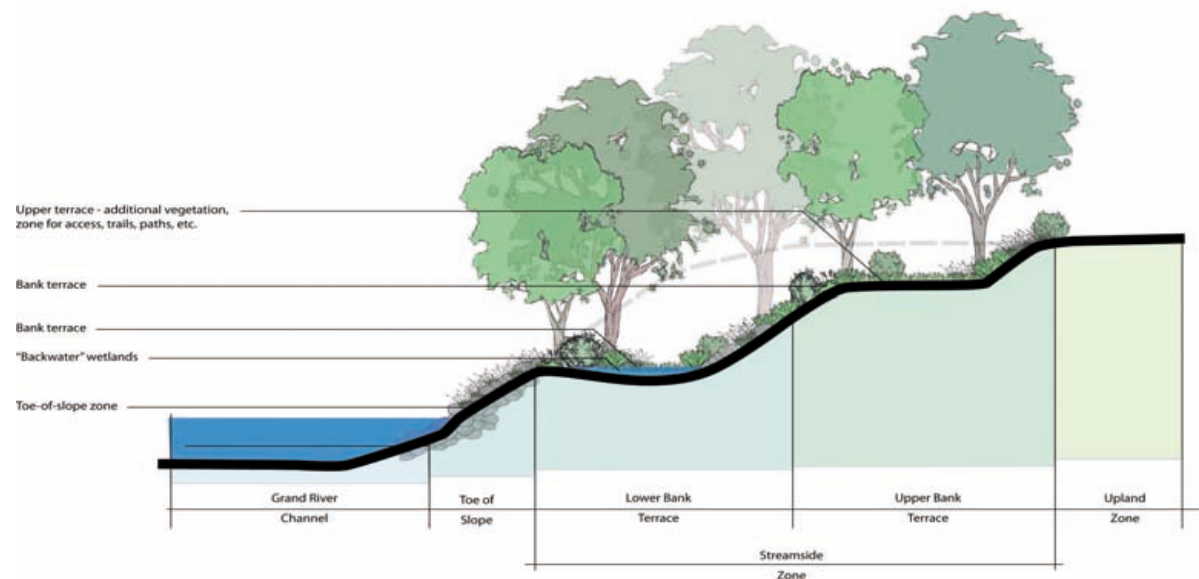


Figure 16

Urban Forest Canopy Coverage by Zoning Class

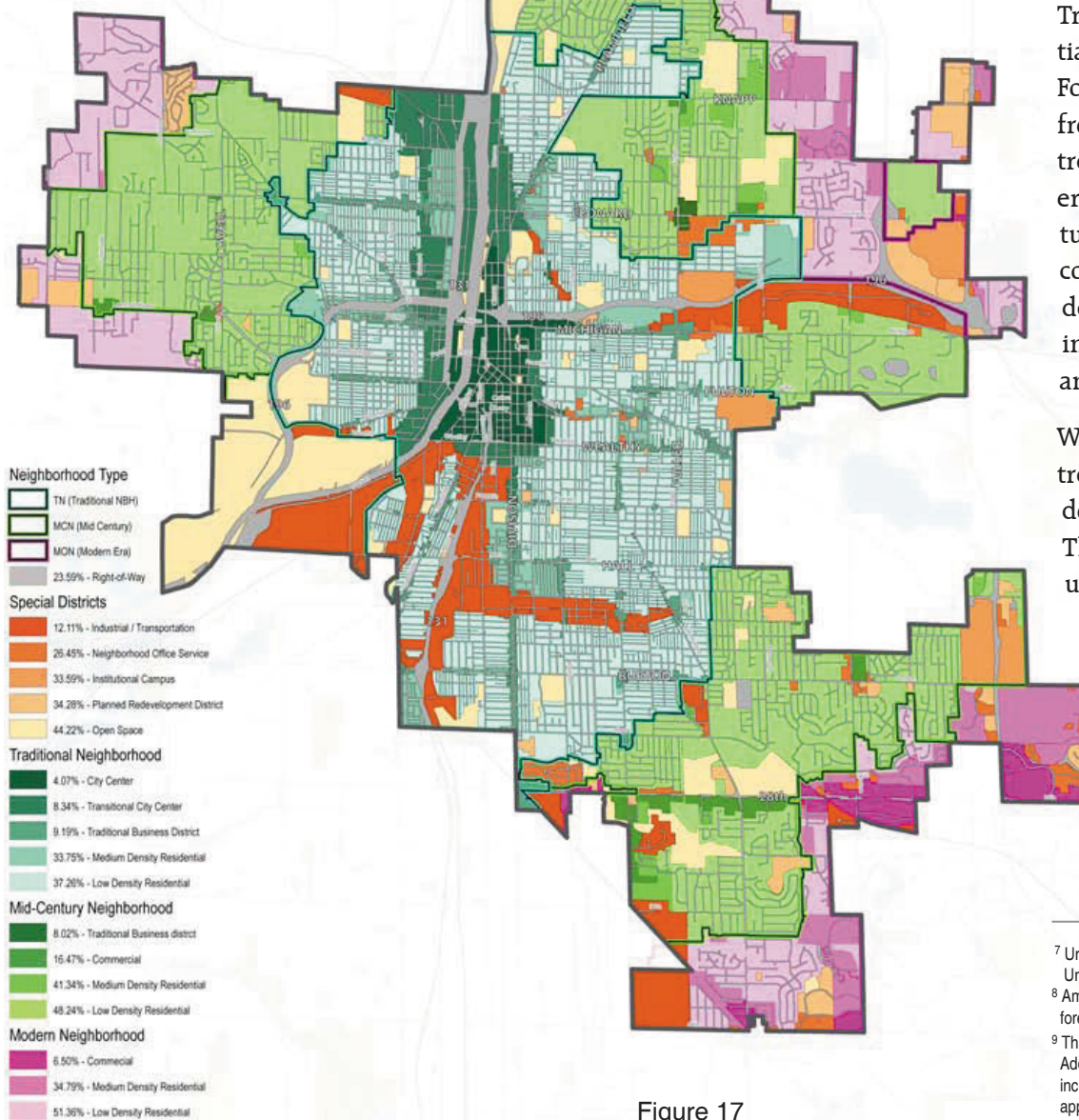


Figure 17

Urban Forest Canopy

Trees in the city (the urban forest canopy) provide substantial environmental, economic and quality of life benefits. For example, a tree's leaves absorb carbon, dust and soot from the air; generate oxygen and reduce noise levels. A tree's roots absorb water and hold soil in place to prevent erosion. Trees create shade to reduce summer temperatures (the urban heat island effect) and energy costs for cooling. Research has also shown that trees increase residential property values and contribute to higher retail sales in shopping areas. Trees even reduce stress and aggression and boost student concentration.

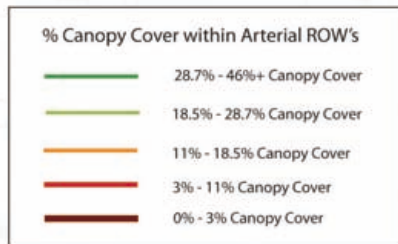
With the help of Grand Valley State University (GVSU)⁷, the tree canopy in Grand Rapids has been documented and the dollar value of some of these benefits has been quantified. The first step in this analysis was to map canopy coverage using 2005 aerial photography. Overall, the canopy coverage in the city is 34.6%, which compares well to the 29.7% average for Michigan cities, but is lower than the target of 40% recommended by American Forests as the ideal target to maximize benefits in our climate zone. This would require an additional 1,520 acres of canopy cover or approximately 185,000 new trees.

⁷ Urban Forest Ecological Services Assessment, Annis Water Resources Institute, Grand Valley State University, 2008.

⁸ American Forests is a non-profit citizens' conservation organization whose vision is to create healthy forest ecosystems for every community.

⁹ The GVSU tree canopy analysis accounted for trees lost to the Emerald Ash Borer up to 2005. Additional losses since that time, losses of trees other than Ashes and potential future losses are not included. As a result the estimate of 185,000 additional trees (which assumes an average tree canopy of approximately 360 square feet) should be considered a minimum goal.

Canopy Coverage on Arterial Streets



Using the tree cover information created by GVSU, Green Grand Rapids re-mapped the data by zoning classifications to illustrate the different percentages of canopy cover in different parts of the city. As this map shows (see Figure 17, Urban Forest: Canopy Cover by Zoning Class, opposite), tree coverage ranges from a high of 51% in low density residential areas in Modern Neighborhoods on the edge of the city to a low of 4% in the City Center. Tree canopy cover on arterial streets was also mapped (see Figure 18, Canopy Coverage on Arterial Streets, right). Improving the tree canopy within the public right-of-way and in city parks will be critically important if Grand Rapids is to achieve its 40% canopy coverage goal.

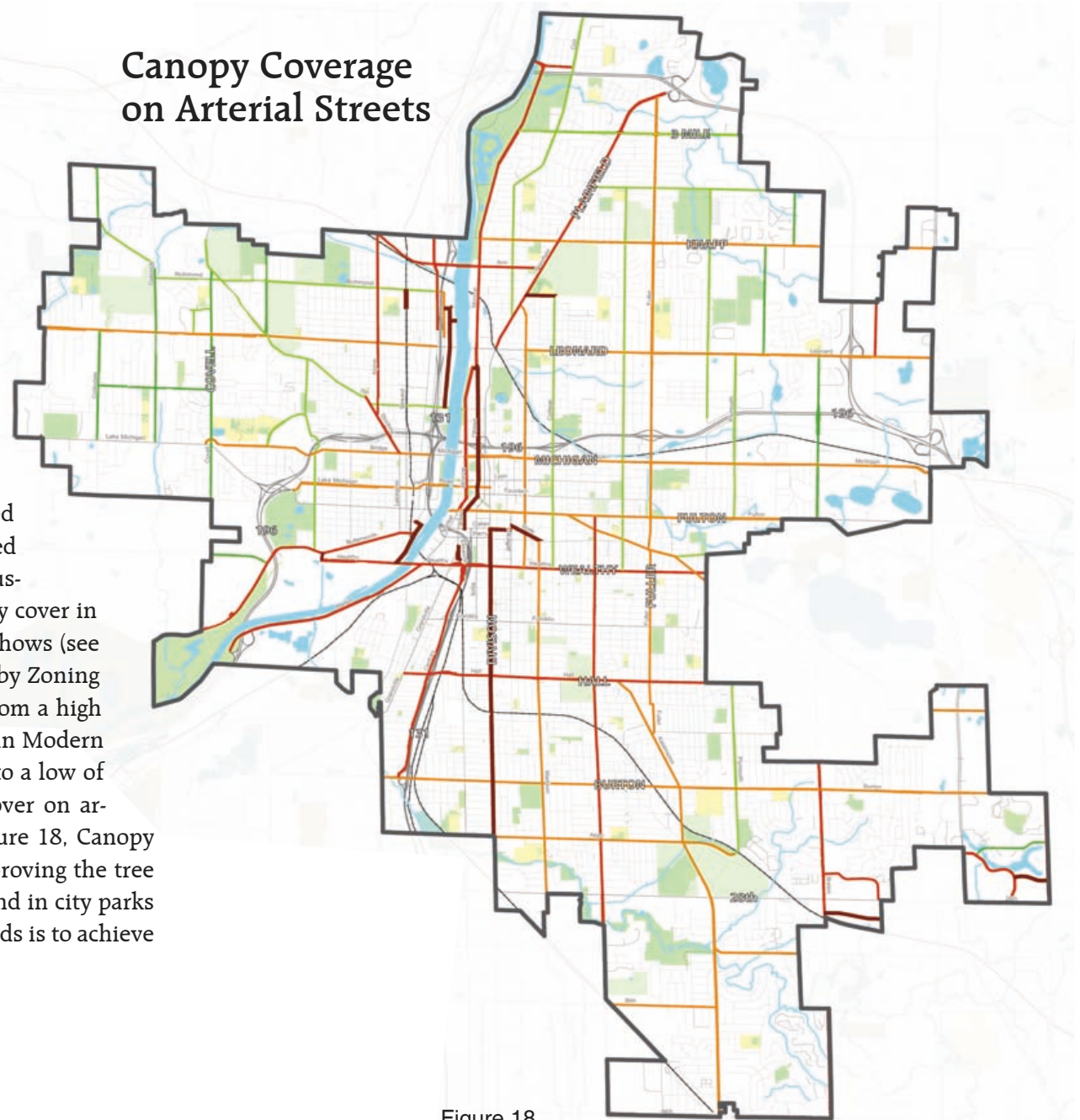


Figure 18



Planning and Public Input Process

Background

Grand Rapids' Parks and Recreation Master Plan was developed as an integral part of the process for updating the community's 2002 citywide Master Plan. While the 2002 Master Plan is still considered a sound policy foundation, a number of new issues had emerged that called for community discussion. A number of these issues related directly to parks and recreation including:

- Significant reductions in funding to support park and recreation facilities and programming;
- The consolidation and disposal of public school sites resulting in reductions in the overall park inventory (park-schools) and concerns about the equitable distribution of park land;
- A desire to expand the recreational use of the Grand River, both as a greenway corridor and a destination; and
- A growing interest in community gardens and expanded access to fresh, local food.

Other issues related to the context in which priorities for park and recreation investments are established included:

- A continuing concern for improving water quality through sustainable design;
- The anticipated loss of thousands of trees as a result of the Emerald Ash Borer and a heightened

- awareness of the value of the urban tree canopy;
- A desire to reduce the community's "carbon footprint" and encourage healthy lifestyles by improving opportunities for walking and biking.

These issues all shared a common thread – the importance of the city's "green infrastructure" and the environmental, economic and social benefits that it provides. As a result, the master plan update – called Green Grand Rapids – was structured to develop recommendations for protecting and restoring an interconnected system of environmental assets and green spaces that provides ecological, health and quality of life benefits to the city and its people.



To organize the planning process, green infrastructure issues were broken down into six topic areas:

- **Natural Systems** – growth management and the protection of environmental resources including the urban forest canopy and water quality (with a focus on larger scale stormwater management strategies)
- **Greening** – greening of the street network (trees; stormwater management) and low impact development (LID) strategies in parks and on private development parcels
- **Connections** – on-street pedestrian and bicycle improvements, off-street trails and transit
- **The Grand River** – mixed use and open space development; the expansion of recreation opportunities and improving the ecological health of the river system
- **Parks and Recreation** – protecting and maintaining existing parks; meeting park acreage deficits; programming priorities and sustainable funding strategies
- **Local Food** – community gardens and farmers' markets



Planning Methods

The following planning methods were used to evaluate existing conditions, develop plan recommendations, and assist the community in identifying priority actions: park accessibility analysis, recreation trends, and a priority needs survey.

Park Accessibility Analysis

Overall, Grand Rapids has adequate park acreage per 1,000 population based on national standards. That park acreage is not evenly distributed across the city, however, resulting in varying "levels of service" in different neighborhoods and on different blocks. While there are a variety of methodologies for evaluating park acreage distribution (or level of service), Green Grand Rapids participants recommend adopting a standard that is simple to understand, but challenging to achieve: Provide an accessible park within $\frac{1}{4}$ mile of every city resident. This standard is based on the idea that the quality of life value of a park is greatest when it is within walking distance of home. To be truly accessible, especially for younger children, for seniors and the disabled, walking to a park should not require crossing a major traffic street or traversing an area that is predominantly industrial or commercial in land use. Another factor in measuring level of service is population density – in other words, how many people an accessible park must serve.

To provide a visual representation of park accessibility today, and an analytical tool for future decision-making, Green Grand Rapids developed a GIS map that links information on walking distance and park accessibility barriers, to the number of accessible park acres and population for

each city block. Figure 19 - Accessible Park Acreage (next page) illustrates this level of service measure for four major categories:

- Unserved areas (purple; no accessible¹⁰ park acres/1,000 people)
- Severely underserved areas (red; less than 1 accessible park acre/1,000 people)
- Underserved areas (orange; 1-10 park acres per 1,000 people)
- Served areas (green; 10 or more accessible park acres/1,000 people)

The population density of each block is also indicated (less than 6 people/ acre; 6-20 people/acre; over 20 people/acre) to provide an additional measure of the impact of each level of service category.

Because lower income households have less disposable income to meet their recreation needs in the private sector, and because their mobility is more likely to be limited by lower rates of car ownership, Green Grand Rapids participants endorsed the addition of a measure of need based on income and recommended that priority in park land acquisition be given to unserved and severely underserved areas with high population density and low household income. Green Grand Rapids also recommends seeking potential partnerships with institutions who have land and facilities that can reduce accessible park acreage deficits (for example, churches, colleges, private schools and other recreation providers). Expanding this partnership approach beyond the city's existing relationship with the public schools offers a cost-effective strategy for improving level of service.

¹⁰ Accessible park acres are located within ¼ mile walking distance of a block with no intervening barriers (major traffic street; large area of industrial or commercial land use).

Recreation Trends

The City of Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation Department offers a wide variety of recreational programs for Grand Rapids residents as well as non-residents. Some of the programs offered include:

Youth:

- Soccer
- Baseball
- Softball
- Tennis
- Dance
- Gymnastics
- Ballet
- Sports agility
- Fencing
- Tae-Kwon-Do



Adult:

- Softball
- Tennis
- Aerobics/fitness classes, such as, Kickboxing, Yoga, Pilates, Zumba, Belly Dancing, Deep Water Aerobics and Step Aerobics
- Fencing
- Tae-Kwon-Do
- Dance



Accessible Park Acreage (acres/1,000 pop.)

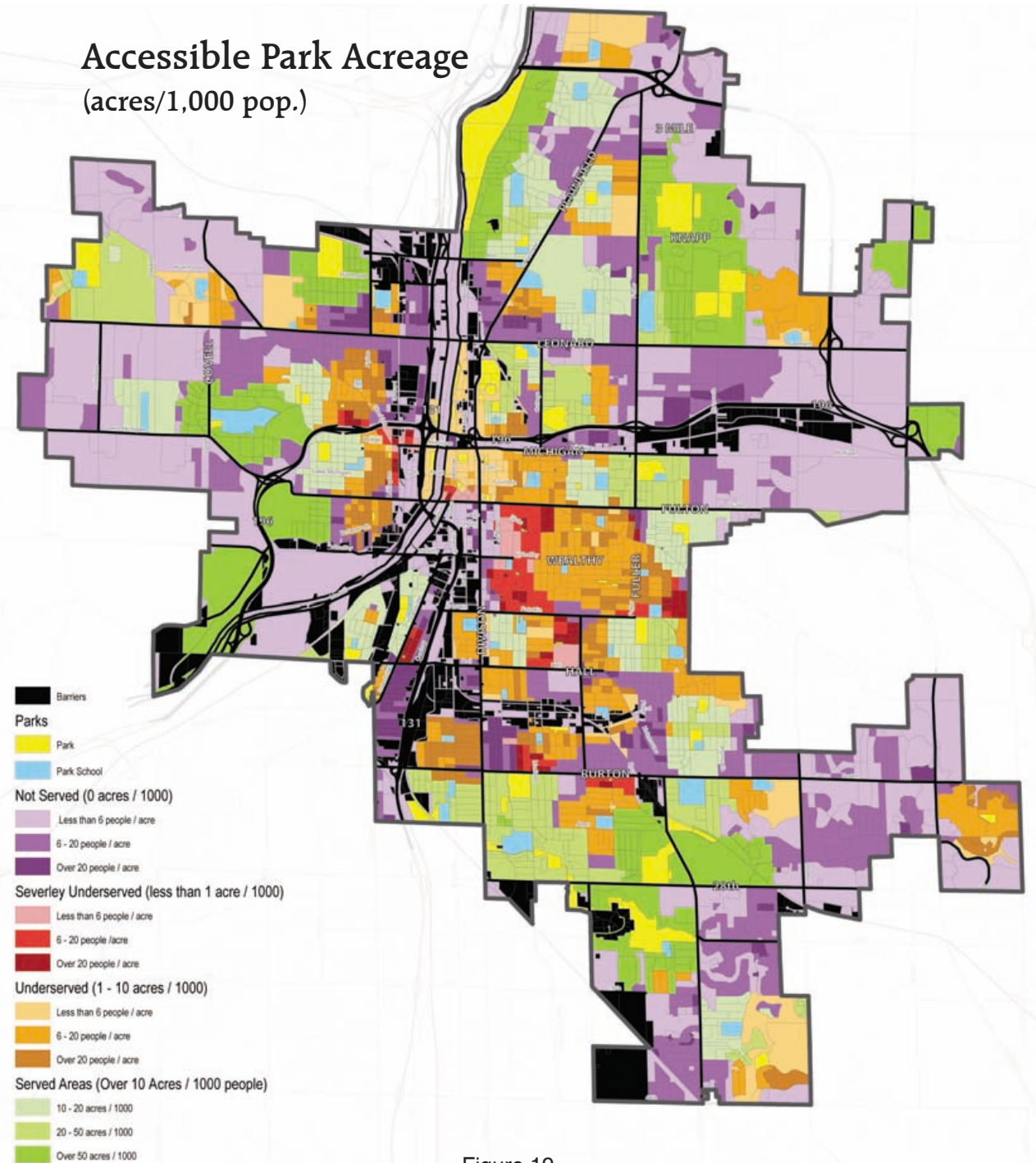


Figure 19

In addition, the Recreation Reaps Rewards Program provides a variety of free recreational activities for teens and youth. Programs are offered at many of the neighborhood schools during the school year and summer months. The program has experienced continued popularity over the past few years.

There are many factors to take into consideration when determining and prioritizing recreation needs. It is important to analyze relevant community information, such as, age, income, interests in the community, and opportunities in nearby communities. Comparing existing recreation opportunities to published standards can be used to determine deficiencies as well as comparing recreation trends that are occurring nationally.

Recreation trends occurring nationally provide insight into activities that are gaining in popularity and can be expected to draw a large number of participants. According to the National Sporting Goods Association, in 2008, the top ten activities which people (ages seven and up) participated in more than once were:

1. **Exercise walking (96.6 million)**
2. Swimming (63.5 million)
3. Exercising with equipment (63.0 million)
4. Bowling (49.5 million)
5. Camping (49.4 million)
6. Bicycle riding (44.7 million)
7. Fishing (42.2 million)
8. Workout at club (39.3 million)
9. Hiking (38.0 million)
10. Weight lifting (37.5 million)

NRPA standards

The recreation standards developed by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) specify facility service areas, the number of facilities needed to service the population as well as the land area needed. The table below indicates that on a city-wide basis, including both schools and city parks, Grand Rapids is deficient in the provision of ice hockey, tennis courts, volleyball courts, football fields, and swimming pools.

Facility	Standard/ Population	Total/Standard	Existing	Deficiency
Basketball Court	1 per 5,000	38.5	58	0
Ice Hockey	1 per 100,000	1.92	1	0.92
Tennis Court	1 per 2,000	96	81	15
Volleyball Court	1 per 5,000	38.5	2	36.5
Football Field	1 per 20,000	9.6	3	6.6
Soccer Field	1 per 10,000	19.2	23	0
Swimming Pool	1 per 20,000	9.6	9*	0.6

*This includes six outdoor pools owned by the City and three indoor pools owned by Grand Rapids Public Schools.

Figure 20

Priority Needs Survey

This survey (on-line and hard copy) asked respondents to identify the top three outdoor recreation facilities and the top three indoor recreation facilities and programs most needed in their area of the city. Questions were also asked about interest in volunteering to help with park clean up/maintenance activities and the preferred method for registering and paying for programs. Open ended questions were included concerning how best to provide information about the city's park system and programs and any additional comments from respondents. The entire survey form is provided in Appendix A.

Indoor facility and program needs survey results:

Survey results indicate that the top five indoor facilities most important to the Grand Rapids community are:

- 1. Farmers Market**
2. Indoor track
3. Aquatic center
4. Gym
5. Meeting space



Other indoor facilities that ranked high in importance/need include: youth facilities, climbing wall, dance/aerobic, media center, recreation center, senior center, and volleyball.

Survey results indicate that the top five indoor programs most important to the Grand Rapids community are:

- 1. Wellness**
2. Self improvement
3. Arts & crafts
4. Music
5. Foreign language

Other indoor programs that ranked high in importance/need include: food service, teen pick-up athletics, daycare, computers, family/intergenerational, pets, media classes, preschool, and water sports.

Outdoor facility needs survey results:

Survey results indicate that the top five outdoor facilities most important to the Grand Rapids community are:

- 1. Trails constructed of various materials and a variety of types**
2. Special events area
3. Ice skating
4. Natural resources area
5. Multi-use fields

Other outdoor facilities that ranked high in importance/need include: multi-use parks, water playground, skateboard park, picnic area, volleyball, soccer, playground, and off-leash dog area.

Public Input Process

Overview

The Green Grand Rapids master plan update began in January 2008 and was structured in three major phases:

Phase 1 – Ideas

- Green Pursuits game
- Stakeholder interviews
- Inventory Map Atlas
- Best practices research

Phase 2 – Choices

- Analytical tools
- Plan concepts
- Draft objectives, strategies, actions

Phase 3 - Actions

- Stakeholder meetings
- Park concept plans
- Grand River concept plans and guidelines
- Existing ordinance and policy review (community gardens; urban forest)
- Parks and Recreation Priority Needs Survey

Community Participation

Green Grand Rapids' community participation process began with a new strategy for inspiring interest and engaging citizens in the master plan update – a game called Green Pursuits. Green Pursuits provided a structured format for gathering community ideas about "green" initiatives without conducting more resource-intensive workshops. Groups were organized by volunteer "citizen planners" to play the game which included a series of question cards and

a corresponding answer booklet to record participants' input, as well as a "game board" (in the form of a city map) to record where efforts should be focused in "greening" streets; improving non-motorized connections; adding parks and improving recreational opportunities on the Grand River. Green Pursuits was played in board rooms, living rooms, school rooms and bars across the city, involving hundreds of citizens in a "fun" activity that produced meaningful results.



A Steering Committee, appointed by the Mayor, met monthly to guide the planning process. Stakeholder interviews and meetings were also held at key points during the planning process to gather information and "check" directions. In addition, design charrettes were conducted in developing concept plans for four parks and three special projects along the Grand River (a riverwalk extension, the possible development of a whitewater "rapids" course on the downtown reach of the river and the redevelopment of a city-owned riverfront parcel).

Green Grand Rapids also included citywide workshops, called Green Gatherings, scheduled at key milestones in the planning process.

Green Gathering #1: Ideas

Tasks: Brainstorm and prioritize "action ideas" for





one of the six topics; provide input on questions based on the results of Green Pursuits (June 2008)

Green Gathering #2: Choices

Tasks: Identify top priority strategies for one of six topics; provide input on "green" improvement priorities (October 2008)

Green Gathering #3: Actions

Tasks: Meet "green champions"¹¹; review and comment on concept plans for parks and three Grand River projects; prioritize strategies across all six topics (May 2009)

Four consensus-based park concept plans (Joe Taylor Park, Ball-Perkins Park; Pleasant Park, and Butterworth Landfill) were developed with stakeholder participation in design charrettes. Concept level cost estimates were also developed to serve as the basis for applications for grant funding. (See Appendix B.)

A series of stakeholder workshops served as the basis for developing concept plans for the expansion of recreation opportunities along the Grand River. Three potential projects were addressed: the future private re-development of the city-owned 201 Market Street site; a riverwalk extension linking Downtown to the Wealthy Street Bridge; and the development of a whitewater course on the downtown reach of the river. (See Appendix C.)

¹¹ During the master plan update process existing organizations adopted portions of the Green Grand Rapids agenda. Other existing organizations started to actively explore how they could help translate green ideas into action. New organizations were also formed to build coalitions on other Green Grand Rapids topics.



Goals, Objectives and Action Strategies

Goals, Objectives and Action Strategies

Objectives, policies and action strategies for parks and recreation were developed through the public input process and with the assistance of the Green Grand Rapids Steering Committee. Overall, the top priorities identified in the Green Grand Rapids process included:

Complete Streets – The appointment of a complete streets committee to draft policies and plans with particular emphasis on adopting and implementing an on-street bike route plan that could improve accessible connections to and between parks.

River Recreation – Increasing recreation opportunities along the river, including the completion of the riverwalk, the addition of parks and new recreational activities like a "rapids" run for kayaks and canoes.

Parks – Addressing accessible park acreage deficits by providing a park within ¼ mile of every city resident and forming partnerships for park maintenance.

Water Quality – Recommendations for protecting and improving water quality by using parks, the riverwalk, and greenways along tributary streams to filter runoff, increase infiltration and reduce flooding .

Trees – The protection and expansion the city's urban forest canopy.

In order to meet the requirements of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources' Guidelines for the Development of Community Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Plans, the objectives, policies and action strategies have been converted into Goals, Objectives and Action Strategies.

Goal 1. Protect existing parks and open spaces and support the acquisition and development of new parks and open spaces, giving special consideration to areas in the city with acreage distribution deficits.

Objective a: Prevent any net loss in park land by adopting a policy requiring deed restrictions guaranteeing the preservation of important open spaces and/or trail connections in considering the sale/transfer of any park land or city-owned property.

Objective b: Provide an "accessible" park with a playground within walking distance (1/4 mile) of all residents of every neighborhood.

Action Strategies

- Map accessibility barriers
- Identify/prioritize areas with deficits
- Identify opportunities for adding park space, including partnerships/joint use

Objective c: Continue to cooperate with the public schools to provide joint park-school facilities.

Action Strategies

- Update the park-school agreement
- Identify/monitor proposed school closures/property sales
- Seek funding for acquisitions where needed to maintain "accessible" acreage

Objective d: Coordinate park acquisitions with the ecological framework plan's identification of high value natural resource areas to protect, buffer and connect.

Goal 2. Capitalize on the Grand River as an asset for economic development and quality of life by encouraging mixed-use development, open space and public access along the river's edge.

Objective a: Investigate opportunities for adding riverfront parks, giving special attention to vacant and under-used city and county properties.

Action Strategies

- Pursue park planning and development on the Butterworth landfill site
- Assess recreation potential of the Wealthy Street pump station site
- Assess (county- and) city-owned property, including 201 Market Street
- Evaluate other under-used riverfront properties as potential park sites
- Consider strengthening ordinance requirements/incentives for publicly accessible green space in private riverfront developments

- Give priority to downtown

Objective b: Expand the range of recreation activities on and adjacent to the river.

Action Strategies

- Add boat launch sites/liveries/portages
- Evaluate the potential to create a kayak course from the 4th Street dam to Butterworth Park or Millennium Park; consider adding a "rapids" element in this river segment
- Support continued crewing activity north of the 4th Street dam
- Consider allowing concessions (boat and bike liveries; cafes; marinas/docks; water taxis) in riverfront parks
- Identify a site for an outdoor performance venue on the downtown riverfront (Ah-Nab-Awen)
- Program more special events on the river
- Add public art/interpretive displays (ecology; history)
- Expand fishing access
- Consider a riverfront farmers market

Objective c: Evaluate the feasibility of creating a kayak "rapids" experience on the river.

Action Strategies

- Seek a sponsor and funding to further evaluate and implement a two-phase project that creates a "rapids" course by (1) modifying the beautification dams (between I-196 and Pearl Street) and providing a portage around the

4th Street dam and (2) creating a "stair step" rapids with numerous short drops from the top of the 4th Street dam downstream.

Objective d: Provide continuous public access and trail/riverwalk connections (walking and cycling) from Riverside Park to Millennium Park with connections to Kent Trails and White Pine Trail.

Action Strategies

- Develop a short-term plan, including on-street segments where necessary
- Provide pavement markings and/or signs, as appropriate, to identify the route
- Develop mid- and long-term action plans¹², including requirements/incentives for a wider private development setback from the river and public access easements
- Develop a continuous riverwalk in accordance with Green Grand Rapids Riverwalk Extension Guidelines

Goal 3. Promote the development of a system of greenways along tributary streams to the Grand River, as well as on-street pedestrian and bicycle corridors, to link all city neighborhoods to the river, parks, major destinations and regional trail systems.

¹² The Michigan Department of Natural Resources plans to purchase the rail ROW that will allow a riverwalk connection to be established between Canal Street Park and Riverside Park. The Green Grand Rapids planning process includes a special study illustrating a concept plan and concept-level cost estimates for extending the riverwalk from the Blue Bridge to the Wealthy Street Bridge on the east side of the Grand River. Both interim and ultimate plan alignments are recommended. In addition, Green Grand Rapids includes a concept plan and concept-level cost estimate for creating a park at the Butterworth landfill. This plan includes a riverwalk (and other park trail connections) that will link to Millennium Park.

Objective a: Complete the Plaster Creek Trail.

Action Strategies

- Coordinate with the City of Wyoming on planned trail extension
- Seek funding for establishing the link from Wyoming to/across the Grand River
- Collaborate in developing a connection to the Thornapple Trail

Objective b: Investigate the feasibility of obtaining public access easements and creating trail connections on other tributary creeks, as well as inactive rail rights-of-way and utility corridors.

Action Strategies

- Assess ownership patterns
- Seek easement agreements
- Pursue regional collaboration through the Grand Valley Metro Council

Objective c: Provide streetscape, pedestrian and bicycle improvements on streets that link to greenway trails and to the river.

Goal 4. Preserve and restore natural areas to improve the health of the river ecosystem, Grand Rapids' primary link to the regional green infrastructure network.

Action Strategies

- Emphasize natural habitat, native landscapes, stormwater management and environmental education at Riverside and Butterworth Parks

- Include Low Impact Development (LID) approaches and environmental education in all riverfront parks
- Protect and restore riparian buffers
- Create more naturalized river edge treatments (earth banks and vegetation as an alternative to flood walls) wherever possible
- Develop riparian buffers and riverbank restoration in accordance with the Green Grand Rapids River Corridor Guidelines

Goal 5. Maintain existing parks and managed open spaces in safe, clean and attractive condition.

Objective a: Establish maintenance priorities that balance cost effectiveness and quality.

Action Strategies

- Work with neighborhood/business organizations to inventory/prioritize maintenance needs
- Seek funding and partnerships to supplement existing budgets
- Use more native landscaping to reduce maintenance
- Identify priority locations for restrooms and drinking fountains and strategies for maintenance
- Consider transfer of Aman Park to Ottawa County

Objective b: Seek involvement of community groups/organizations in helping to maintain parks and open spaces.

Action Strategies

- Capitalize on the willingness of the Friends of Grand Rapids Parks to coordinate volunteer efforts
- Review, research, and implement a new Adopt-A-Park program

Why are community gardens important?

Environmental Benefits

- Encourage environmental stewardship by educating the community on the ecosystems that support food production
- Reduce carbon footprint by reducing vehicle miles traveled to distribute and access food
- Maintain permeable surface area to better manage stormwater
- Encourage composting

Economic Benefits

- Increase local food security
- Capture food expenditures in the local economy
- Provide lower cost fresh foods to urban residents
- Provide income to gardeners/urban farmers
- Convert unused property to productive use
- Increase green space and neighborhood appeal
- Encourage neighborhood reinvestment; increase nearby property values

Quality of Life Benefits

- Bring nature into the city
- Strengthen neighborhoods: social cohesiveness and pride
- Provide education on nutrition, ecology and environmental stewardship
- Expand options for exercise and recreation
- Cultivate individual empowerment; entrepreneurship
- Provide opportunities for youth involvement to build job skills

Goal 6. Encourage and support farmers markets and community gardening to promote the availability of lower cost fresh local food, good nutrition and community cohesion and pride.

Objective a: Assess the potential for additional farmers markets and community garden areas available in the city.

Objective b: Re-evaluate city policies to allow the sale or lease of city-owned and tax foreclosed properties for use as a community garden

Goal 7. Foster awareness, use and stewardship of public parks and open spaces.

Objective a: Better market and advertise the park system.

Action Strategies

- Provide maps, brochures and other information in various forms (electronic, social networking)
- Educate the community to the economic, environmental, and social benefits of parks and open spaces
- Foster greater community awareness and use of parks by providing more easily available information and offering more special events to attract patrons

Objective b: Hold more special events to attract park users and build support for the parks.

Goal 8. Develop parks and managed open space to become models of sustainable design.

Objective a: Use LID design principles in developing/redeveloping all park sites

Action Strategies

- Protect valuable natural resources
- Expand native landscapes
- Protect/expand the tree canopy
- Minimize impervious area
- Use stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs)
- Use locally sourced and/or recycled content materials

Objective b: Use parks as demonstration and education sites for green practices to promote environmental stewardship.

Objective c: Identify opportunities for joint park-stormwater management projects.

Goal 9. Design parks and provide recreation programming in response to community/neighborhood needs and preferences.

Objective a: With community input, prepare concept plans for Joe Taylor, Ball-Perkins, Pleasant, and Butterworth landfill parks.

Objective b: Involve resident groups in identifying park maintenance priorities, program/facility needs and in monitoring levels of use.

Objective c: Give priority to funding multi-purpose parks (as opposed to specialized parks) that provide a diversity of user activities.

Objective d: Support expanded recreational programming for residents of all ages.

Action Strategies

- Focus on health and fitness for children, youth and seniors
- Meet the growing demand for walking and cycling trails
- Encourage multiple uses of public buildings for recreational programming
- Implement an online registration process for recreational programming

Goal 10. Identify a range of "one-time" and sustainable strategies for funding the acquisition, development and maintenance of parks and open spaces.

Objective a: Investigate opportunities for partnerships for the provision of recreation facilities and programs.

Action Strategies

- Work with Friends of Grand Rapids Parks
- Work with churches, schools, sports teams and other recreation providers
- Seek corporate sponsorships
- Pursue adopt-a-park agreements
- Consider tax credit for park contributions
- Investigate youth participation in park

maintenance

- Investigate pros/cons of using parks for fundraising events

Objective b: Explore the feasibility of consolidating park and recreation services, planning, operations, and management with neighboring jurisdictions.

Objective c: Evaluate the feasibility of establishing dedicated revenue sources to support parks and recreation (for example user fees or a parks or broader green initiatives millage).

Objective d: Consider the cost reduction and revenue generating benefits of the sale, lease or transfer of city-owned park and cemetery property.

Action Strategies

- Establish conditions and criteria
- Consider transfer of Aman Park to Ottawa County

Objective e: Revise development regulations to provide requirements/incentive for private sector provision of useable, public open space.

Action Strategies

- Focus on downtown and riverfront



Action Program

Action Program

This chapter is concerned with the actions required to make the plan a reality and is guided by the fact that the City faces many difficult choices in funding capital projects and meeting operating expenses. In a time of declining resources, a 5-year master plan risks becoming an academic exercise if it proposes a multitude of projects that have little hope of being implemented in the foreseeable future. At the same time, a master plan with no vision of the future, that presents no challenges to the community and simply focuses on maintenance of the status quo, is not really a plan at all.

The master plan meets this challenge by providing a flexible approach to implementation. The implementation chapter begins with the identification of criteria used to prioritize the extensive list of projects that were identified through the planning process. The application of these criteria results in a recommended phasing of projects that can be used to match needed projects with available resources.

Evaluation Criteria

An essential aspect of plan implementation is the development of a system for prioritizing projects and phasing their development to match available resources. For this purpose, a comprehensive set of project evaluation criteria was developed¹³ to rank and prioritize the projects identified in this master planning effort, as well as additional projects that will emerge in the future. The project evaluation criteria are listed in Figure 21. A list of seven exceptions to the project criteria is listed in Figure 22.



For the most part, the criteria are self-explanatory. Several considerations are emphasized:

- Demonstrated need is a very important consideration, and is reflected in several of the criteria.
- Projects that serve to enhance public access to facilities are favored. Enhanced public access may be accomplished in several ways, including increasing public awareness of existing facilities and programs, improving the geographic distribution of facilities within the city, or increasing accessibility for disabled persons or specific demographic groups.
- Costs are also an important consideration. Projects that can be accomplished without the creation of additional operating or maintenance costs for the city, and projects that involve a cost sharing between the city and other public or private entities, are favored.

¹³ These criteria were developed and adopted by the Parks and Recreation Department in the 1990's and re-adopted by the Parks Advisory Board in 2010.

Parks and Recreation Projection Evaluation Criteria

1. Will reduce, or not add to, operating or maintenance costs.
2. Corrects an unsafe equipment or facility condition, or reduces or eliminates a city liability.
3. Upgrades basic system infrastructure or deteriorated facilities that are needed.
4. Increases user enjoyment of existing, needed facilities or programs.
5. Increases accessibility, usability, or services for persons with disabilities.
6. Increases availability, accessibility, or usability of facilities or programs to different demographic groups to meet identified needs.
7. Encourages city partnerships with the private sector, other public agencies, or neighborhoods to meet identified needs.
8. Helps achieve equitable geographic distribution of facilities or programs while meeting identified needs.
9. Increases public awareness of programs or facilities.
10. Increases leisure opportunities, develops lifetime leisure skills, and increases passive recreation or family participation.
11. Preserves natural or undeveloped areas, takes advantage of major water features, or links river-edge parks with other facilities.
12. A facility or program not previously offered, or in short supply, that meets an identified need.
13. Provides a basic amenity for a park or recreation facility.

Figure 21



Parks and Recreation Project Evaluation Criteria - Exceptions

1. Funding is now available for a project that meets recognized needs.
2. City Commission interest or preference.
3. A unique acquisition opportunity.
4. Identified benefits clearly exceed costs.
5. Project addresses a major inequity or urgent need.
6. Can be supported with user fees.
7. Fulfills a previous commitment consistent with identified needs.

Figure 22

Project Phasing

The project evaluation criteria were applied¹⁴ to a broad set of projects identified through the master plan (see Figure 23). Each time a given project met one of the criteria, it received a point and the total number of points was added. A rank order for each project, on a scale of 1 to 8, was also established. In addition, the evaluation identified the specific master plan goal or goals that the project supports. The results of this evaluation led to the phasing plan that is shown in Figure 24.

Each year, the list of projects will be updated and re-ranked on the basis of the 13 criteria. As noted, the results of this evaluation can be used to phase the implementation of the master plan, matching available funding with priority projects. For example, in a given year, funding may be available to implement only the three highest ranked capital projects. In another year, perhaps only the top ranked project may be funded. The project evaluation criteria are a systematic and flexible tool that can be used to develop a yearly capital budget that responds to community needs and available resources.

Capital Budget

For the City of Grand Rapids, capital planning and financing is distinguished between major and minor projects. Major capital projects are those that range in value from \$20,000 to millions of dollars. Minor capital projects are typically less than \$20,000. In addition, certain funds are legally restricted to certain types of projects. Because many depart-

ments do not have dedicated funding sources, the City has established a separate Capital Reserve Fund. Four percent of the City's income tax and 1.25 mills of property tax revenue support this fund. Historically, a portion of the Capital Reserve Fund has been dedicated to capital purchases that are too small for bonding, but are not appropriate for an operating department's budget. This program provides approximately \$2,000,000 annually. Dollars are allocated based on certain criteria including preservation of existing facilities, safety, and financial leveraging. The repair, maintenance, and addition of infrastructure projects in the city require long-term planning and are budgeted in a five-year capital plan. The Parks and Recreation Department has been instructed to submit a list of projects for Fiscal Year 2011 (beginning July 1, 2010) in an amount not to exceed \$100,000. It is anticipated that this amount will be typical for the next five years and is reflected in the Implementation Schedule (see Figure 24). For years FY2012 through FY2015 it is anticipated that the \$100,000 could be used as a 25% match for Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grants.

Figure 24 is organized by year and includes project names and general cost estimates as well as possible funding sources. This implementation schedule serves as a framework for decision makers; however, it is likely to be amended in the future due to unanticipated circumstances such as private donations, changing recreation trends, funding alternatives, community opinion, and/or available grants.

The total estimated cost for the 59 projects included in Figure 23 is \$83,519,500 — while the estimated costs for the 35 projects included in Figure 24 is approximately

¹⁴ An initial evaluation by Parks and Recreation Department staff was reviewed and approved by the Parks Advisory Board.

\$64.5 million. The projects listed in Figure 23 will be submitted to state and federal agencies with specific grant applications as supplementary information so that state and federal agencies can understand future community needs when reviewing applications or when writing appropriate legislation. This longer list of projects also demonstrates to the general public the extent and importance of outside

funding needed to implement comprehensive improvements to Grand Rapids' park system. It should signal a wake-up call that if the park system continues to receive little general fund support the consequences of putting off the needed improvements could be dire and will certainly be more costly in the future.



Figure 23

Location	Major Capital Item	Amount	Reduce or not add maint. Cost	Repairs unsafe conditions & reduces liability	Upgrades infrastructure or deteriorated facilities	Increases user enjoyment	Increases accessibility for persons with disabilities
Ah Nab Awen Park	Park renovation including stage, walkways, lighting and landscaping	\$325,000.00	1	1	1	1	1
Downtown Riverwalk	Various improvements	\$75,000.00	1	1	1	1	1
Fulton Street Farmers Market	Renovations to Office Building	\$50,000.00	1	1	1	1	
Joe Taylor Park	Water playground, restroom, parking lot, community gardens, landscaping, court area, lighting	\$675,000.00		1	1	1	1
Canal St. Park to Riverside Park	Railroad Acquisition	\$2,233,500.00		1	1	1	1
Aberdeen and Martin Luther King, Jr. Parks	Basketball and tennis court renovations	\$100,000.00	1	1	1	1	
Aberdeen, Briggs, Campau, Cherry, Fuller, Garfield, Huff, Lincoln, Martin Luther King, Jr., Westown and Wilcox Parks	Play equipment	\$400,000.00	1	1	1	1	1
Aberdeen, Briggs, Coit, Fuller, Garfield, Lincoln, Martin Luther King, Jr., MacKay/Jaycee and Westown Commons Parks	Basketball and tennis court renovations	\$400,000.00	1	1	1	1	1
Ah Nab Awen, Clemente, Sixth Street, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Riverside Parks	Restroom renovations	\$400,000.00	1	1	1	1	1

Figure 23

Increases availability, accessibility, or usability to meet identified needs	Partnerships with private/public agencies or neighborhoods	Helps achieve equitable geographic distribution of facilities or programs	Increases public awareness	Increases leisure opportunities	Preserves natural or undeveloped areas	A facility or program not offered or in short supply that meets an identified need	Provides a basic amenity	Total Points	Ranking Order	Supports Plan Goal
1	1		1	1		1	1	11	1	5
1	1		1	1		1	1	11	1	2,4,5,8 & 9
1	1	1	1	1		1	1	11	1	5 & 6
1	1	1	1	1		1	1	11	1	1,6,8 & 9
1	1	1	1	1	1	1		11	1	1,2 & 4
1	1	1		1		1	1	10	2	5
1	1	1		1			1	10	2	5
1	1	1		1			1	10	2	5
1	1	1				1	1	10	2	5

Figure 23

Location	Major Capital Item	Amount	Reduce or not add maint. Cost	Repairs unsafe conditions & reduces liability	Upgrades infrastructure or deteriorated facilities	Increases user enjoyment	Increases accessibility for persons with disabilities
Fulton Street Farmers Market	Development including headhouse building, vendor canopy, plaza/courtyard, and parking lot/driveway	\$3,000,000.00	1	1	1	1	1
Grand Loop	Bike facilities, both on-road and off-road connecting various parks and public spaces	\$200,000.00		1	1	1	1
Grand Rapids Urban Market	Indoor/outdoor vendor stalls, greenhouse, incubator kitchen, restaurants, retail, parking	\$27,000,000.00			1	1	1
Grand River - Whitewater Phase I	Modify downstream dams	\$1,230,000.00		1	1	1	1
Grand River - Whitewater Phase II	Modify Fourth Street dam	\$2,300,000.00		1	1	1	1
Lyon Square	Modify plaza and amphitheatre	\$3,500,000.00		1	1	1	1
Pleasant Park	Play equipment, paths, lighting, fencing and landscaping	\$820,000.00			1	1	1
Riveredges Trail	Construction of non-motorized trail from Canal Park to Ann Street	\$5,116,000.00			1	1	1
Riverwalk Extension	West side of Grand River from Fulton Street to Butterworth Street	TBD			1	1	1
Riverwalk Extension	Extension from Singer to South of Fulton Street	\$1,750,000.00		1	1	1	1

Figure 23

Increases availability, accessibility, or usability to meet identified needs	Partnerships with private/public agencies or neighborhoods	Helps achieve equitable geographic distribution of facilities or programs	Increases public awareness	Increases leisure opportunities	Preserves natural or undeveloped areas	A facility or program not offered or in short supply that meets an identified need	Provides a basic amenity	Total Points	Ranking Order	Supports Plan Goal
1	1		1			1	1	10	2	5, 6 & 11
1	1	1	1	1		1		10	2	3
1	1	1	1	1		1	1	10	2	6
1	1		1	1		1	1	10	2	2,4 & 8
1	1		1	1		1	1	10	2	2,4 & 8
1	1		1	1		1	1	10	2	
1	1	1	1	1		1	1	10	2	8 & 9
1	1	1	1	1	1	1		10	2	2,4 & 8
1	1	1	1	1		1	1	10	2	2,3
1	1		1	1		1	1	10	2	2,4,8

Figure 23

Location	Major Capital Item	Amount	Reduce or not add maint. Cost	Repairs unsafe conditions & reduces liability	Upgrades infrastructure or deteriorated facilities	Increases user enjoyment	Increases accessibility for persons with disabilities
Rosa Parks Circle	Ice rink railing, trash receptacles, tables, chairs, trees, and replacement of stabilized gravel	\$290,000.00	1	1	1	1	1
Seward Ave. Bikeway	Bike/Ped facilities from Butterworth St. to North Park St.	\$2,500,000.00		1	1	1	1
Aman Park	Park renovation including composting restroom, trail signage, trail repairs, parking, trees and landscaping	\$400,000.00			1	1	1
Ball/Perkins Park	Park development including community gardens, playground, picnic shelter, restroom, trails of various materials, and native landscaping	\$1,000,000.00				1	1
Butterworth	Phase I construction (roads and infrastructure - including boat ramp)	\$2,500,000.00		1		1	1
Butterworth	Phase II construction (west entrance, maintenance area, picnic area, recreation & sports fields, special event/festival space, playground, skatepark, pump track and restroom)	\$3,500,000.00				1	1

Figure 23

Increases availability, accessibility, or usability to meet identified needs	Partnerships with private/public agencies or neighborhoods	Helps achieve equitable geographic distribution of facilities or programs	Increases public awareness	Increases leisure opportunities	Preserves natural or undeveloped areas	A facility or program not offered or in short supply that meets an identified need	Provides a basic amenity	Total Points	Ranking Order	Supports Plan Goal
	1		1	1		1	1	10	2	5
	1	1	1	1		1	1	10	2	3
1	1		1		1	1	1	9	3	5 & 8
1	1	1	1	1		1	1	9	3	1,6,8 & 9
1	1	1	1	1		1		9	3	2,4,6,8 & 9
1	1	1	1	1		1	1	9	3	4,6,8 & 9

Figure 23

Location	Major Capital Item	Amount	Reduce or not add maint. Cost	Repairs unsafe conditions & reduces liability	Upgrades infrastructure or deteriorated facilities	Increases user enjoyment	Increases accessibility for persons with disabilities
Clemente Park	Park renovation including skatepark equipment, picnic shelter, parking, trees and landscaping	\$650,000.00			1	1	
Crescent Street Corridor	Pedestrian connectivity improvements from Bostwick Ave. to Monroe Ave.	\$3,580,000.00		1	1	1	1
Fish Ladder Park	Park renovation including restroom, paths, kiosk, trees and landscaping	\$275,000.00			1		1
Lookout Park	Replacement of stairs	\$400,000.00		1	1	1	
Lookout Park	Construction of new walking paths and landscaping	\$450,000.00			1	1	1
MacKay/Jaycee Park	Construction of additional ballfields, entry drive, upgrades to picnic shelter and restrooms	\$750,000.00		1	1	1	
Riverside Park	Park renovation including picnic shelter, promenade, trail resurfacing, parking, trees and landscaping	\$1,500,000.00			1	1	1
Westown Park	Construction of a water playground, trees and landscaping	\$300,000.00		1	1	1	1

Figure 23

Increases availability, accessibility, or usability to meet identified needs	Partnerships with private/public agencies or neighborhoods	Helps achieve equitable geographic distribution of facilities or programs	Increases public awareness	Increases leisure opportunities	Preserves natural or undeveloped areas	A facility or program not offered or in short supply that meets an identified need	Provides a basic amenity	Total Points	Ranking Order	Supports Plan Goal
1	1	1	1	1		1	1	9	3	5 & 8
1	1		1			1	1	9	3	3
1	1		1	1	1	1	1	9	3	5 & 8
1	1	1	1	1		1		9	3	5
1	1		1	1		1	1	9	3	5
1	1		1	1		1	1	9	3	5
1	1		1		1	1	1	9	3	5, 8 & 4
1	1	1	1			1		9	3	5 & 8

Figure 23

Location	Major Capital Item	Amount	Reduce or not add maint. Cost	Repairs unsafe conditions & reduces liability	Upgrades infrastructure or deteriorated facilities	Increases user enjoyment	Increases accessibility for persons with disabilities
Wilcox Park	Construction of a water playground, lodge building improvements, trees and landscaping	\$400,000.00		1	1	1	1
Butterworth	Phase III construction (community gardens and Farmers market)	\$3,000,000.00				1	1
Fuller Park	Park renovation including restroom, ballfield, parking, dog park, trees and landscaping	\$600,000.00	1		1		
MidTown Green Park	Park renovation including trees/landscaping, seating area	\$75,000.00			1	1	1
Mulick Park	Park renovation including tennis court, paths, restroom, trees and landscaping	\$300,000.00	1		1	1	1
Plaster Creek Trail at Division	Trail head ramp connection improvements	\$200,000.00		1		1	1
Plaster Creek non-Motorized Trail Phase III	Trail Development from Division Ave. to Kirtland St.	\$750,000.00		1		1	1
Plaster Creek non-Motorized Trail Phase IV	Trail development from Kirtland St. to Oxford St.	\$1,500,000.00		1		1	1
Richmond Park	Park renovation including pool gutters, basketball and tennis courts, play equipment, lodge building, picnic shelter, parking lot, walking path, trees and landscaping	\$750,000.00	1		1		1

Figure 23

Increases availability, accessibility, or usability to meet identified needs	Partnerships with private/public agencies or neighborhoods	Helps achieve equitable geographic distribution of facilities or programs	Increases public awareness	Increases leisure opportunities	Preserves natural or undeveloped areas	A facility or program not offered or in short supply that meets an identified need	Provides a basic amenity	Total Points	Ranking Order	Supports Plan Goal
1	1	1	1			1		9	3	5 & 8
1	1	1	1	1		1		8	4	6 & 4
	1	1	1	1		1	1	8	4	5 & 8
1	1		1	1		1		8	4	5 & 8
	1		1	1		1		8	4	5 & 8
1	1		1		1	1		8	4	3
1	1		1	1		1		8	4	3
1	1		1	1		1		8	4	3
1		1		1		1	1	8	4	5 & 8

Figure 23

Location	Major Capital Item	Amount	Reduce or not add maint. Cost	Repairs unsafe conditions & reduces liability	Upgrades infrastructure or deteriorated facilities	Increases user enjoyment	Increases accessibility for persons with disabilities
Coit Park	Park renovation including playground equipment, paths, trees and landscaping	\$250,000.00	1		1	1	1
Highland Park	Park renovation including restroom, play equipment, paths, ballfield, lighting, trees and landscaping	\$750,000.00			1	1	1
Lincoln Park	Park renovation including pool, lodge, trees and landscaping	\$400,000.00	1		1	1	1
Mary Waters Park	Park improvements including restroom, lodge building, courts, and field	\$500,000.00	1		1	1	1
Oxford Park	Improvements including roads, infrastructure, playground, and fields	\$450,000.00					
Sixth Street Bridge Park	Portage landing	\$400,000.00		1	1	1	1
Garfield Park	Park renovation including water playground, parking lot resurfacing, gym building and tree planting	\$1,500,000.00	1	1	1	1	
Huff Park	Park renovation including boardwalk replacement, trail and parking lot resurfacing	\$600,000.00	1	1	1	1	
Ken-O-Sha Park and Plaster Creek Trail	Park renovation including restroom, trail, signage, trees and landscaping	\$300,000.00	1		1		

Figure 23

Increases availability, accessibility, or usability to meet identified needs	Partnerships with private/public agencies or neighborhoods	Helps achieve equitable geographic distribution of facilities or programs	Increases public awareness	Increases leisure opportunities	Preserves natural or undeveloped areas	A facility or program not offered or in short supply that meets an identified need	Provides a basic amenity	Total Points	Ranking Order	Supports Plan Goal
	1		1	1				7	5	5 & 8
	1			1	1		1	7	5	5 & 8
	1			1		1		7	5	5 & 8
1				1			1	7	5	5
1	1	1	1	1	1	1		7	5	5
1	1		1					7	5	2
	1						1	6	6	5 & 8
	1						1	6	6	5
	1		1	1	1			6	6	5 & 3

Figure 23

Location	Major Capital Item	Amount	Reduce or not add maint. Cost	Repairs unsafe conditions & reduces liability	Upgrades infrastructure or deteriorated facilities	Increases user enjoyment	Increases accessibility for persons with disabilities
Campau Park	Park renovation including pool, tennis courts, pathways, ballfield, trees and landscaping	\$275,000.00			1	1	1
Dickinson Park	Park renovation including play equipment, basketball court, paths, trees and landscaping	\$250,000.00	1		1	1	
Douglas Park	Park renovation including play equipment, basketball court, paths, trees and landscaping	\$250,000.00	1		1	1	
Plaster Creek Family Park	Park renovation including ballfield, bleachers, paths, and play equipment	\$250,000.00	1		1	1	
Belknap Park	Park renovation including ballfields, bleachers, walkways, parking, trees and landscaping	\$575,000.00	1		1		
Cherry Park	Park renovation including tennis and basketball courts, trees and landscaping	\$150,000.00	1		1		
Monument Park	Park renovation including paths and site furniture	\$375,000.00			1	1	
Sullivan Field	Park renovation including grandstands, ballfield, trees and landscaping	\$700,000.00			1		1
TOTAL		\$83,519,500.00*					

* + \$75,000.00 For Downtown Riverwalk Improvements x 4 years = \$300,000.00

Figure 23

Increases availability, accessibility, or usability to meet identified needs	Partnerships with private/public agencies or neighborhoods	Helps achieve equitable geographic distribution of facilities or programs	Increases public awareness	Increases leisure opportunities	Preserves natural or undeveloped areas	A facility or program not offered or in short supply that meets an identified need	Provides a basic amenity	Total Points	Ranking Order	Supports Plan Goal
	1		1					5	7	5 & 8
1							1	5	7	5 & 8
1							1	5	7	5 & 8
1							1	5	7	5
	1		1					4	8	5 & 8
	1		1					4	8	5 & 8
	1		1					4	8	5
	1		1					4	8	5 & 8

Figure 24

Implementation Schedule

Project	Estimated Cost	Fiscal Year ¹	Funding Sources	Funding Sources Key
Acquisition to Address Deficiencies	TBD	2011	MNRTF, GF, Prvt. Fd	BFRTC - Brownfield Redevelopment Tax Credit
Ah Nab Awen Park	\$325,000.00	2011	DDA	
Downtown Riverwalk Improvements	\$75,000.00	2011	DDA	
Fulton Street Farmers Market Office	\$50,000.00	2011	CDBG-ARRA	CDBG - Community Development Block Grant
Joe Taylor Park	\$675,000.00	2011	MB, Fd, CDBG, CSG	
Lyon Square Improvements	\$3,500,000.00	2011	Prvt, DDA	
Railroad Acquisition	\$2,233,500.00	2011	MNRTF, TEA, GF, DDA, MNTIFA	CSG - Civic or Service Groups
Rosa Parks Circle	\$290,000.00	2011	Fd	DDA - Downtown Development Authority
Aberdeen Tennis Courts	\$65,000.00	2012	GF, Fd, Prvt	
Downtown Riverwalk Improvements	\$75,000.00	2012	DDA, GF	EDA - U.S. Economic Development Administration
Fulton Street Farmers Market	\$3,000,000.00	2012	GF, Fd, Prvt.	
Grand Loop Bike Facilities	\$200,000.00	2012	CSG, Prvt, GF, Fd	EPA - Environmental Protection Agency
Grand Rapids Urban Market	\$27,000,000.00	2012	DDA, Fd, Prvt., EDA, BFRTC, MNRTF	
Martin Luther King, Jr. Basketball Courts	\$35,000.00	2012	GF, Fd, Prvt	Fd - Foundation Grants/ Endowments
Pleasant Park	\$820,000.00	2012	CSG, MNRTF, Fd, GF, Prvt.	
Riverwalk Extension - Fulton to Butterworth	TBD	2012	CSG, MNRTF, Fd, GF, Prvt.	
Seward Avenue Bikeway	\$2,500,000.00	2012	GF, Fd, Prvt. MNRTF, MDOT	GF - General Fund
Basketball and Tennis Court Renovations	\$400,000.00	2013	GF, Fd, Prvt., MNRTF	MB - Municipal Bonds
Butterworth Park Phase I	\$2,500,000.00	2013	GF, Fd, Prvt., MNRTF, EDA	MNRTF - MI Natural Resources Trust Fund
Clemente Park Renovations	\$650,000.00	2013	GF, Fd, Prvt., MNRTF, CSG	
Crescent Street Corridor/Connector	\$3,850,000.00	2013	Fd, Prvt., MDOT, DDA	MNTIFA - Monroe North Tax Increment Financing Authority
Downtown Riverwalk Improvements	\$75,000.00	2013	DDA	
Playground equipment at 11 sites	\$400,000.00	2013	CSG, MNRTF, GF, Fd, Prvt	Prvt. - Private Donations/ Fundraising
Ball/Perkins Park	\$1,000,000.00	2014	CSG, MNRTF, Fd, Prvt, GF	TEA - Transportation Enhancement Activity
Downtown Riverwalk Improvements	\$75,000.00	2014	DDA	
Grand River Whitewater Phase I - modify downstream dams	\$1,230,000.00	2014	CSG, MNRTF, DDA, Fd, Prvt	
Restroom Renovations at 5 sites	\$400,000.00	2014	CSG, MNRTF, Fd, Prvt	
Riveredges Trail - Canal Park to Ann St	\$5,116,000.00	2014	CSG, MNRTF, TEA, DDA, Fd, Prvt	
Basketball and Tennis Court Renovations	\$400,000.00	2015	CSG, MNRTF, Fd, Prvt, GF	
Downtown Riverwalk Improvements	\$75,000.00	2015	DDA	
Grand River Whitewater Phase II - modify Fourth St. dam	\$2,300,000.00	2015	CSG, MNRTF, Fd, Prvt, DDA	
Riverwalk Extension from Singer to South of Fulton St.	\$1,750,000.00	2015	CSG, MNRTF, Fd, Prvt, DDA	
Butterworth Park Phase II	\$3,500,000.00	2015	GF, MNRTF, Fd, Prvt, EPA	
Total \$64,564,500.00				

¹ Fiscal Years begin July 1 and end June 30.

Appendix A

Recreation Facilities Determination of Needs Survey

Dear Grand Rapids Residents:

The City of Grand Rapids would like your input on the need for public recreation facilities within your area. This information will be used to assist in the formulation of the Recreation Master Plan for the City.

-
-
1. People who attended the June 25, 2008 Green Gathering event felt strongly that more information about and the marketing of (maps & brochures) the City's park system and programs are needed... ***What would be the best way to get information to you more effectively and encourage your use and enjoyment of what we offer?***

-
2. ***Would you be interested in volunteering (as an individual or as a member of a neighborhood, business or other organization) to help with clean ups, maintenance tasks or special flower plantings in your favorite park?***

☐ YES

☐ NO

4. ***What is your preferred method for registering and paying for activities/programs offered by the City of Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation Department?***

☐ Phone

☐ Fax

☐ U.S. Mail

☐ Website/On-line Registration, if it were available

INDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES

1. Do you believe there is a need for indoor recreation facilities in your area?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

2. If so, what types of facilities and/or programs are needed?

Facilities	Programs	
<input type="checkbox"/> Gymnasium	<input type="checkbox"/> Teen	<input type="checkbox"/> Other Facilities or Programs
<input type="checkbox"/> Senior Center	<input type="checkbox"/> Organized athletics	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Youth/Teen Center	<input type="checkbox"/> Pick-up athletics	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Meeting Space	<input type="checkbox"/> Age 50+ Programs	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Dance/Aerobic Facilities	<input type="checkbox"/> Wellness Programs	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Banquet Room	<input type="checkbox"/> Golf Lessons	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Media Center	<input type="checkbox"/> Day Care	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Indoor Track	<input type="checkbox"/> Special Education (impaired)	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Racquetball Court	<input type="checkbox"/> Food Service	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Volleyball Court	<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-School	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Climbing Wall	<input type="checkbox"/> Family/Intergenerational	
<input type="checkbox"/> Farmers Market	<input type="checkbox"/> Arts & Crafts	<input type="checkbox"/> Hobbies/Games
<input type="checkbox"/> Aquatic Center	<input type="checkbox"/> Pets	<input type="checkbox"/> Self Improvement
	<input type="checkbox"/> Computers	<input type="checkbox"/> Water Sports
	<input type="checkbox"/> Foreign Language	<input type="checkbox"/> Music

3. Of those you've checked or listed above, please list the top three facilities that you consider most important.

4. Of those you've checked or listed above, please list the top three programs that you consider most important.

5. *Would you be willing to pay for the top three by:*

Fees ☐ Yes ☐ No

Taxes ☐ Yes ☐ No

OUTDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES

1. *Do you believe there is a need for additional outdoor recreation facilities in your area?*

☐ Yes

☐ No

2. *If so, what types of fields, courts and/or areas are needed?*

Fields

☐ Baseball

☐ Softball

☐ Football

☐ Soccer

☐ Track

☐ Multi-use

Courts

☐ Multi-Use

☐ Basketball

☐ Volleyball

☐ Tennis

Other Outdoor Areas

☐ Picnic Shelter

☐ Picnic Area-Tables/BBQ Grills

☐ Restrooms

☐ Special Events Area

☐ Playground

☐ Water Playground

☐ Skateboard Park

☐ Off-Leash Dog Area

☐ Trails

☐ Natural Resource Area

☐ Ice Skating

☐ Wellness Programs

☐ Golf Lessons

☐ Other Outdoor Areas

3. *Of those you've checked or listed above, please list the top three outdoor facilities that you consider most important.*

4. *Would you be willing to pay for the top three by:*

Fees ☐ Yes ☐ No

Taxes ☐ Yes ☐ No

DEMOGRAPHICS

Please tell us a little about yourself to help us as we review the results of this survey. All of your answers to this survey are kept confidential.

Your gender ☐ Male ☐ Female

Your age _____ yrs

How many years have you lived in the City of Grand Rapids? _____ yrs

How many children are in your household? _____ children

How many adults (19 or older including you) are in your household? _____ adults

In which area of the City of Grand Rapids do you live? (circle one)

NE NW SE SW

OTHER

Please provide any additional comments you would like to make concerning Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation:

Thank you for your valuable input!



Parks as Models of Sustainable Design

Four park concept plans have been prepared to build community consensus on park improvements; demonstrate how parks can serve as models of sustainable design and provide the plan and cost information that serves as the basis for grant applications. These park concept plans include:

- Joe Taylor Park, a neighborhood park to be expanded and improved adjacent to the Baxter Community Center.
- Ball-Perkins Park, a high value natural resource area where environmental interpretation, trails and an improved community garden are the focus.
- Butterworth Landfill, a city-owned super fund site located on the Grand River, which can provide a range of recreational and environmental education opportunities, as well as critical riverwalk connections to Millennium Park.
- Pleasant Park, a recently acquired 2.30 acre parcel designed to address limited, isolated or unique recreational needs which reflect historical character of the surrounding community.

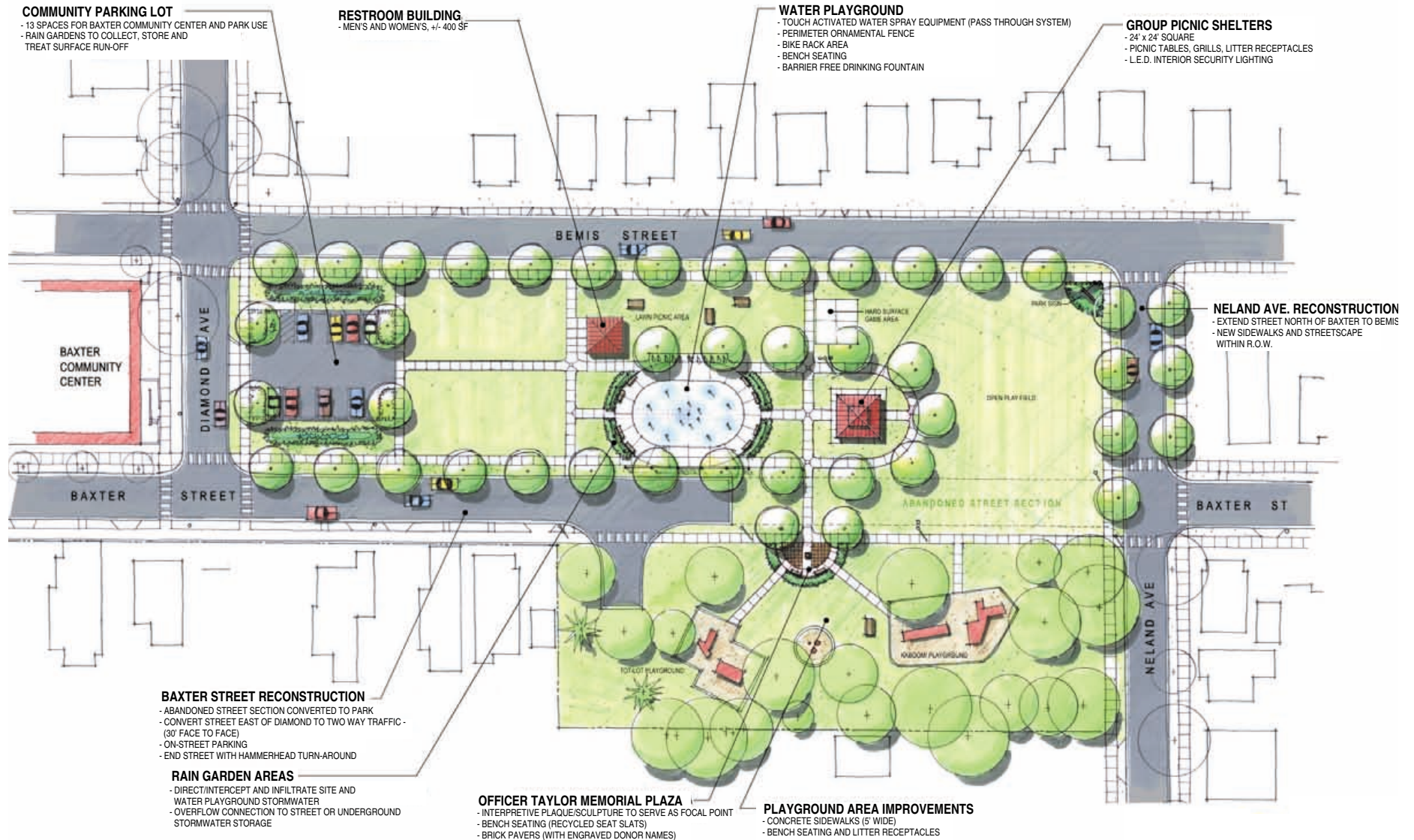
As open green spaces, parks already contribute to stormwater management by providing large permeable surface areas that can infiltrate rainfall, as well as plants and tree cover that filter and absorb runoff. But additional steps can be taken to maximize the potential for parks and trail corri-

dors (greenways) to minimize runoff volumes and improve water quality by incorporating LID strategies into their design. Parks can also be planned in coordination with larger scale stormwater management facilities to provide surface or below ground detention areas. For example, despite its small size, the concept plan prepared for the expansion and improvement of Joe Taylor Park includes an underground stormwater detention area designed to collect runoff from the surrounding area and filter out pollutants before release to storm sewers.

Parks can also be planned and retro-fitted to become models of sustainable design in other ways, for example:

- including high value natural areas (identified in the Ecological Framework) as a consideration in acquisition decisions
- expanding native landscaping to reduce the area requiring irrigation and/or regular mowing and to improve habitat
- ensuring that riparian buffers in parks and trails along the Grand River and tributary streams are protected and restored
- protecting existing and planting additional trees to maintain and expand the urban forest canopy; and or
- providing educational programs and interpretive signs to explain "green" practices.

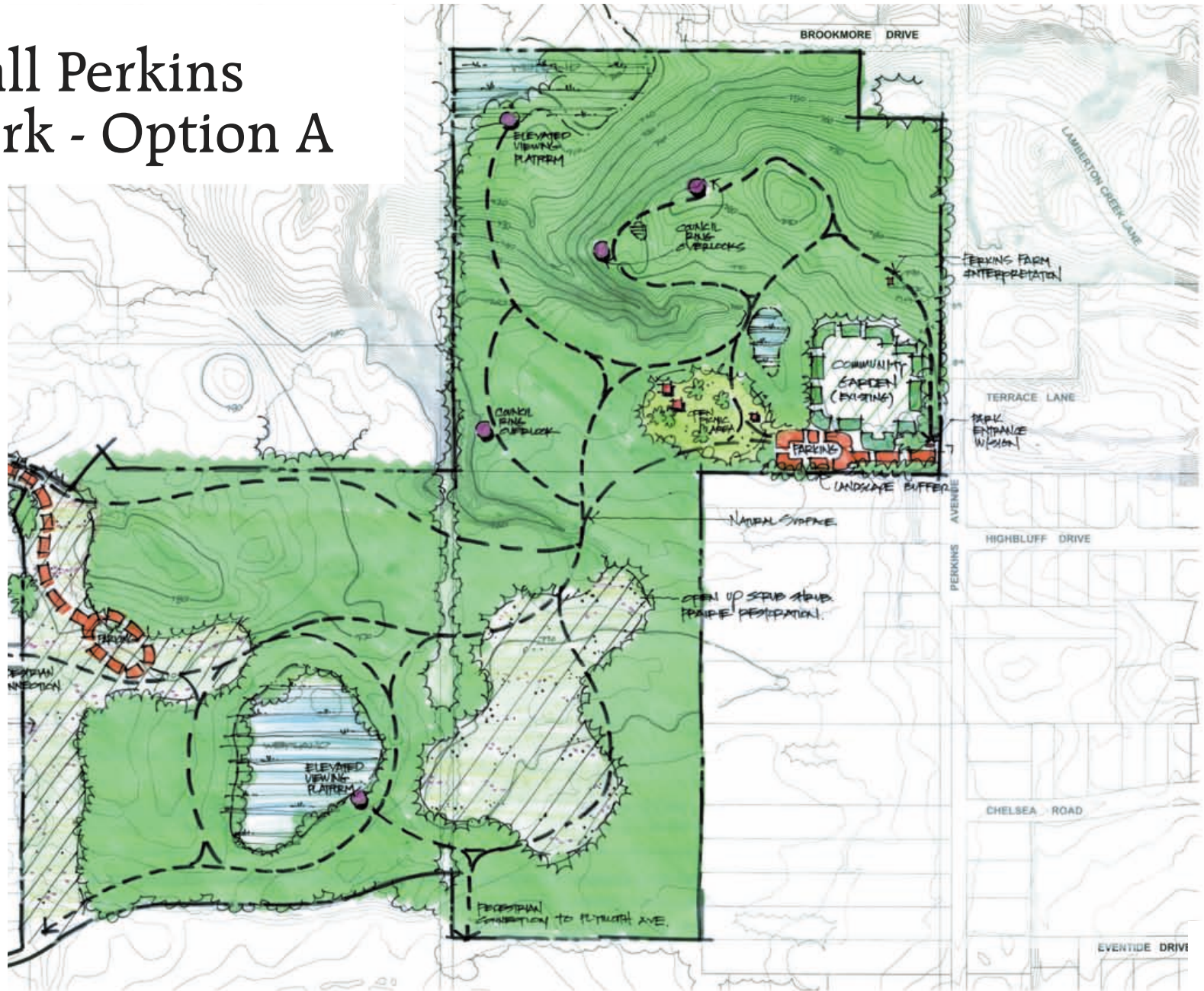
Joe Taylor Park



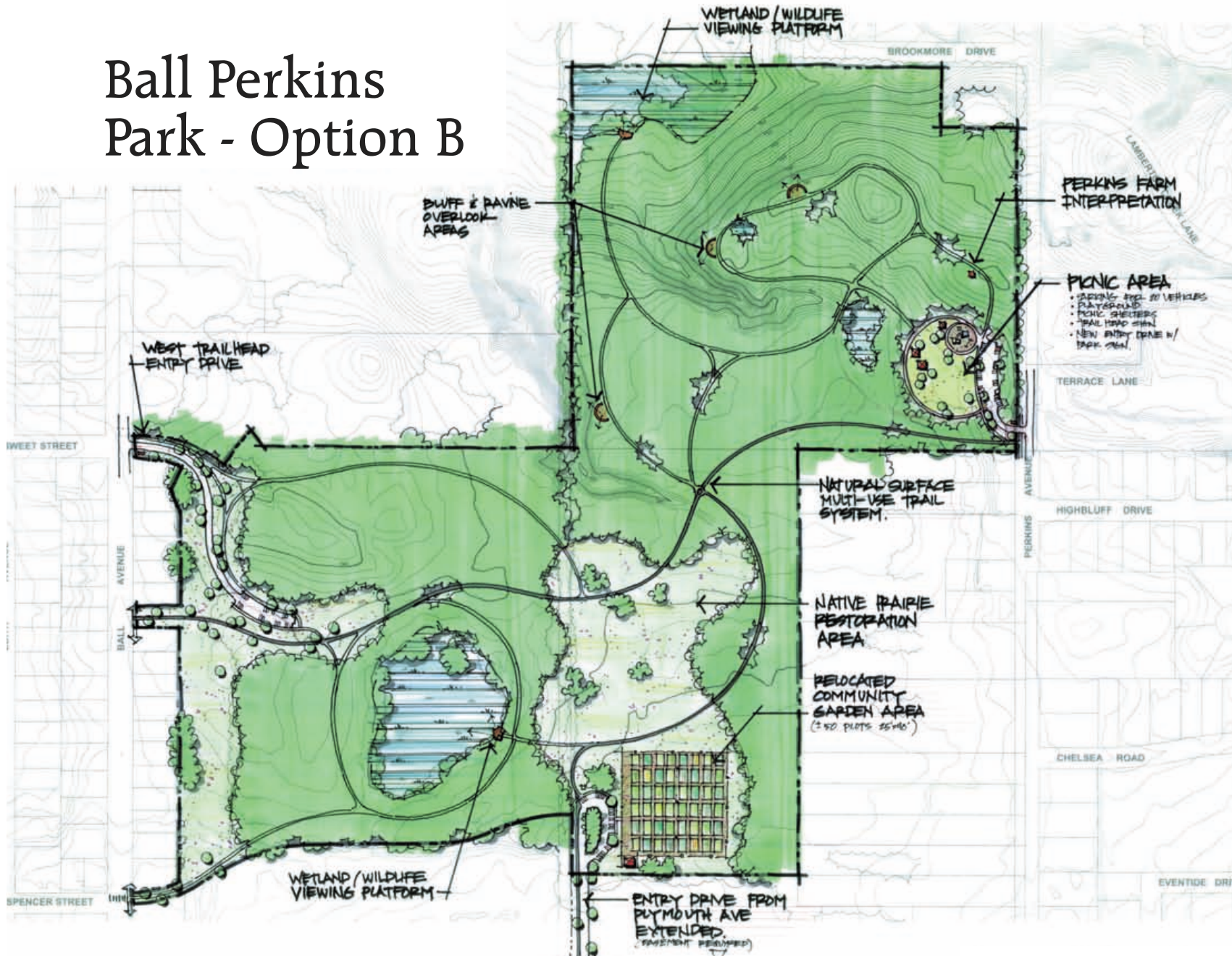


Butterworth Landfill

Ball Perkins Park - Option A



Ball Perkins Park - Option B





Pleasant Park

Appendix C

River Recreation Opportunities

Green Grand Rapids addressed a number of inter-related initiatives for expanding recreation opportunities along the Grand River. These include:

- extending the riverwalk;
- riverwalk design; and
- the creation of a rapids/whitewater course at, and below, the 4th Street dam.

Riverwalk Extensions

The Master Plan endorses the recommendation originally proposed in the Grand River Edges (1981) plan that continuous riverfront "walk/bike ways" be created on both sides of the Grand River to connect Millennium Park (and Kent Trails on the south) to Riverside Park (and the White Pine Trail on the north), linking the riverfront parks in between. This system of riverfront parks and connecting "green" corridors will serve as a city-wide recreational amenity, a non-motorized transportation link and the spine of Grand Rapids green infrastructure network.

Today, 5.5 miles of riverwalk connections have been completed representing approximately 46% of the combined length of the east and west banks of the Grand River. These riverwalk segments are concentrated in the downtown area and at Riverside Park, leaving critical gaps north of the Sixth Street Bridge and south of Fulton Street. Opportunities to close these gaps are being pursued. First, the Michigan De-

partment of Natural Resources (MDNR) has been attempting to assist in the purchase of rail right-of-way on the east bank of the river to make the riverwalk connection north to Riverside Park possible. Second, Green Grand Rapids has developed conceptual plans for both interim and permanent riverwalk connections from Fulton to Wealthy Street (including public open space easements on the city-owned 201 Market Street site) and as part of a concept plan for future park development on the city-owned Butterworth Landfill. Completing these riverwalk extensions is one of the top priorities established through the Green Grand Rapids process.

Riverwalk Design

Existing riverwalk segments have been completed over time by different entities. As a result, the character and quality of the riverwalk varies. Different paving widths and materials, wall and railing treatments, landscaping and site furnishings create a fragmented experience. In many cases, the width of existing riverwalk segments does not meet current standards for accommodating both bicyclists and pedestrians.¹

The location of the riverwalk also varies, particularly in the downtown area where steep earth embankments, floodwalls and multiple east-west bridge crossings exist. These conditions make it necessary to decide whether the riverwalk should be located:

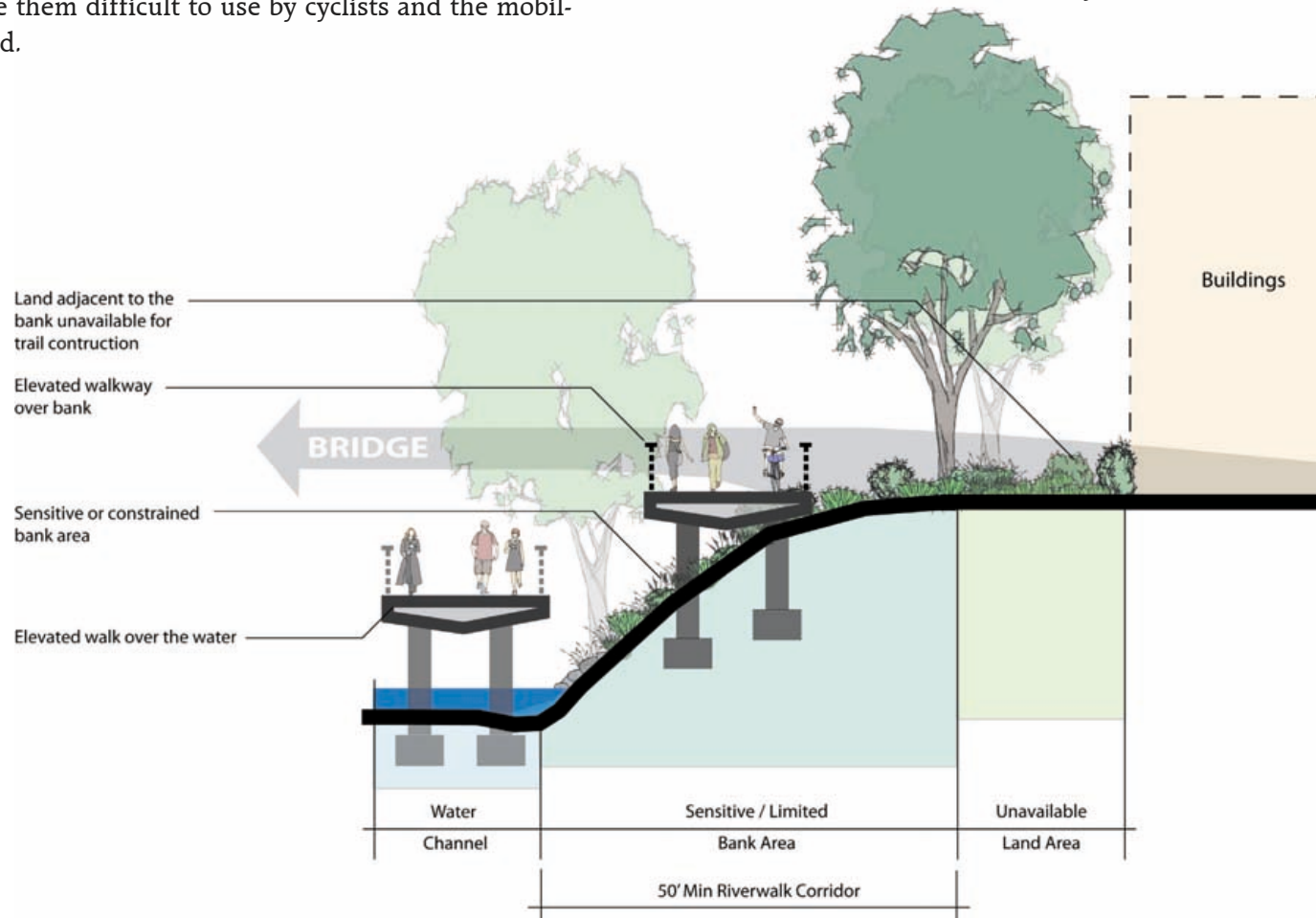
- at the top of the floodwall or bank adjacent to buildings which could create an "active"

¹ Guidelines published by the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) recommend a minimum clear width of 10 feet for a path shared by cyclists and pedestrians (shared use path).

- urban edge, with street crossings at grade, or
- closer to the water's edge, passing under bridges, but visually separated from adjacent development and subject to periodic flooding and closure.²

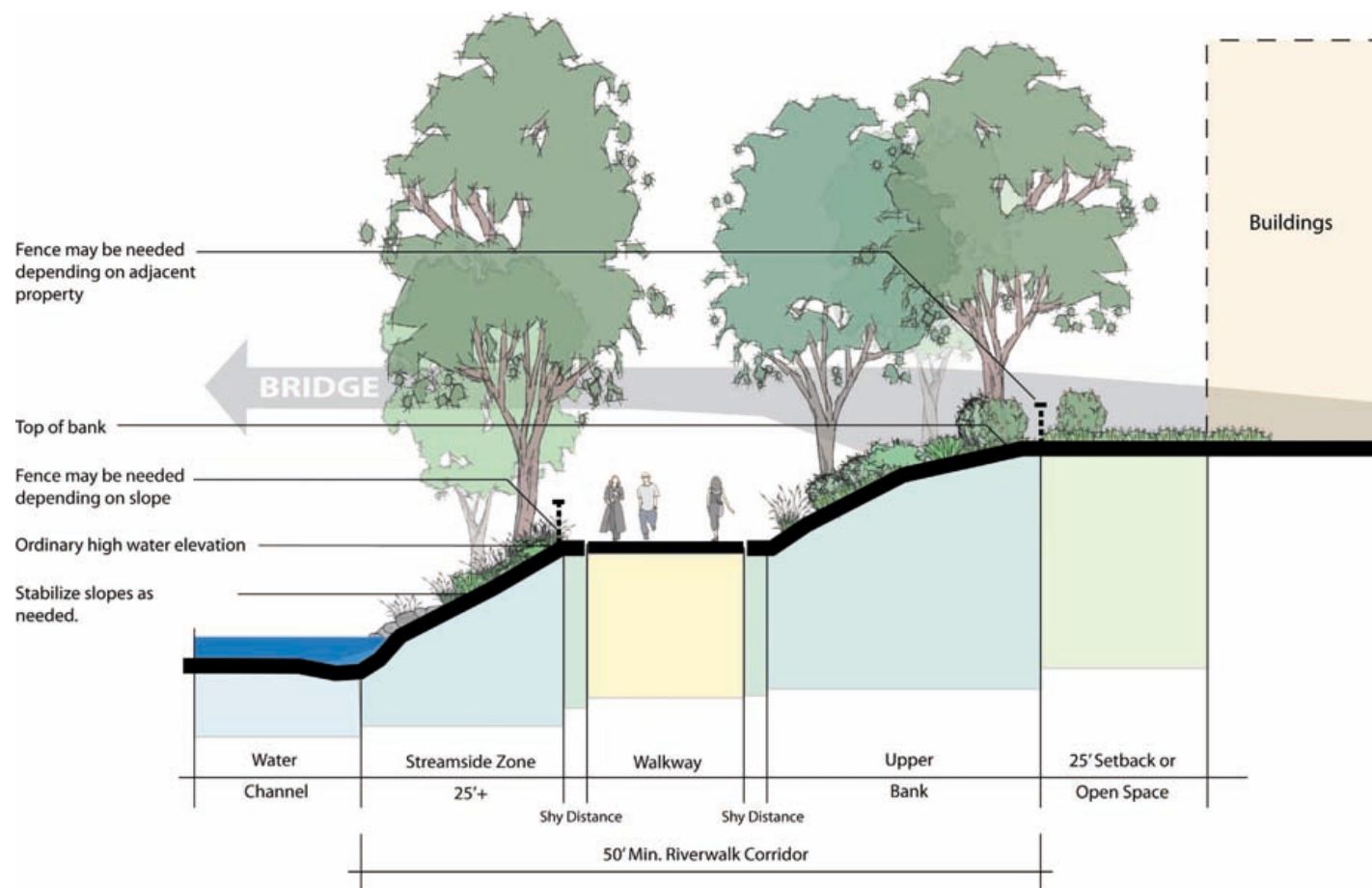
A combination of path alignments currently exists, requiring ramps and steps to connect upper and lower riverwalk segments. These variations in vertical alignment isolate some portions of the riverwalk from downtown activity and make them difficult to use by cyclists and the mobility limited.

Green Grand Rapids took a closer look at strategies for enhancing the riverwalk's functional continuity and design coherence, as well as opportunities for designing both the riverwalk and riverfront parks to improve the ecological health of the river. As noted above, a concept plan was prepared for a riverwalk extension along the east bank from the Blue Bridge and Fulton Street south to Wealthy Street (and, ultimately Butterworth Landfill and Millennium Park). This area includes the city-owned 201 Market



Street site, as well as privately owned, largely undeveloped parcels to the north. Prepared with the input of a group of downtown stakeholders and endorsed by community participants, this riverwalk extension concept recommends:

- including both upper and lower level riverwalk alignments, giving priority to the development of a continuous upper level walkway wherever possible³;
- establishing a minimum elevation for lower level riverwalk segments that will minimize seasonal flooding and riverwalk closures⁴;
- providing connections between upper and lower riverwalk segments that make it easy for users to navigate changes in grade and are compliant with Americans for Disabilities Act (ADA) standards;



- establishing a consistent minimum pathway width (12 feet) to accommodate both cyclists and pedestrians;
- providing a durable pathway surface (concrete) that will minimize maintenance requirements
- establishing attractive gateways to the river walk, for example at street ends and bridge crossings;
- providing stabilized access to the water's edge (for boaters and fishermen) at appropriate locations; and
- restoring and naturalizing the riverbank whenever possible to filter and remove pollutants from urban runoff and improve habitat conditions (aquatic and terrestrial), while maintaining flood protection.

A Rapids/Whitewater Course

One of the most popular ideas for expanding recreation opportunities on the Grand River is the possibility of creating a "rapids" run for kayaks and canoes in the river's downtown reach. The concept of returning the rapids to the river has been discussed for a number of years. Green Grand Rapids combined this idea with the desire for improving boating access and expanding boating activity in exploring opportunities for creating a whitewater course taking advantage of the 4th Street dam and five downstream beautification dams. The potential benefits of

such a project include:

- creating a downtown recreational amenity that would attract both users and spectators;;
- serving as catalyst for downtown economic development;
- improving safety and accessibility for fishermen and other river users by adding stabilized water access points; and
- enhancing in-stream fish habitat and naturalizing river edges.

The major challenges include:

- costs of construction, operations and maintenance;
- estimating the potential return on investment;
- balancing different user interests, especially in the area of the 4th Street dam; and
- ensuring that the design of the whitewater course does not increase flood levels.

A number of alternative approaches⁵ were illustrated, evaluated and discussed in a heavily attended planning workshop that demonstrated both the high level of interest in the concept and the importance of balancing the needs and preferences of fishermen and kayakers. Based on workshop input, a preferred alternative was developed and presented for community review and comment. The preferred alternative keeps the 4th Street dam intact to reduce costs, avoid possible environmental hazards asso-

² Flood stages along the downtown portion of the Grand River can increase water levels by as much as 12 -15 feet.

³ In some locations lower level walkways may be the only feasible option (for example, adjacent to the Charlie's Crab site and passing under the US 131 bridge).

⁴ A minimum elevation of 600 feet is recommended.

⁵ These alternatives included modifying the beautification dams only to create a whitewater course; a creating new whitewater course parallel and connected to the river; modifying the 4th Street dam or removing the dam to create a "rapids" run.

⁶ The concept level opinion of probable construction cost for Phase 1 is approximately \$1.2 million, with an additional \$2 - \$5 million for Phase 2.

ciated with the release of contaminants from behind the dam, and maintain upstream water levels as they are today. As an initial phase, re-configuration of the five downstream beautification dams is proposed to create a series of whitewater features; a portage route around the 4th Street dam is also recommended, as well as access sites for canoe/kayak put-in and take-out at a number of new locations. In the second phase, an additional whitewater element is proposed by creating a step-like rapids on the downstream side of the 4th Street dam, while keeping the dam itself intact. It is anticipated that this expansion of the whitewater course would attract paddlers from beyond the immediate region, as well as providing opportunities

for competitions and training courses.

Green Grand Rapids recommends further exploration of Phase 1 of this preferred whitewater concept by undertaking a feasibility/preliminary design study. Implementation of this initial phase would make it possible to test the level of use and economic development benefit at a relatively low cost before a decision is made as to whether or not to pursue the second phase of whitewater course development⁶.

